

NEBRASKA HISTORIC BUILDINGS SURVEY  
RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY FINAL REPORT

OF

PLATTE COUNTY, NEBRASKA

*PREPARED FOR*

NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

*SUBMITTED BY*

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGY CENTER  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-LACROSSE  
LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN  
REPORT OF INVESTIGATION #224

JULY 1996

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Goetz and Jacob Ping.

Lastly, we extend our gratitude to the citizens of Platte County for accommodating us while we were completing our field work. We are very appreciative to everyone who attended the public meetings and provided information regarding the history of the county. We also greatly appreciate all of the county residents who inquired about our welfare while we were traveling the rural roads.

## STATE AND FEDERAL APPRECIATION

The Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey (NeHBS) projects are administered by the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office (NeSHPO) with the cooperation of the Nebraska State Historical Society (NSHS). The NeHBS is funded in part with the assistance of a federal grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service.

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## INTRODUCTION

Throughout most of Nebraska's history, historic preservation was the province of dedicated individuals and organizations working along with their local communities. Since the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, however, the Governor of each state has been required to appoint a State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to oversee preservation efforts managed by the 1966 Act. In Nebraska, the Director of the Nebraska State Historical Society (NSHS) serves as SHPO. The staff of the NSHS' Historic Preservation Division forms the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office (NeSHPO).

The NeSHPO administers a wide range of preservation programs. The duties of the NeSHPO relating to programs called for by the National Historic Preservation Act include:

- Conducting and maintaining a statewide historic buildings survey;
- Administering the National Register of Historic Places program;
- Assisting local governments in the development of local historic preservation programs and certification of qualifying governments;
- Administering a federal tax incentives program for the preservation of historic buildings;
- Assisting Federal agencies in their responsibility to identify and protect historic properties that may be affected by their projects and;
- Providing preservation education, training, and technical assistance to individuals and groups as well as local, state, and federal government agencies.

What follows is a brief description of NeSHPO programs. Though described separately, it is important to remember that the programs often act in concert, and should be considered elements of the NeSHPO mission, as well as a part of the mission of the NSHS.

## NEBRASKA HISTORIC BUILDINGS SURVEY (NEHBS)

The Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey (NeHBS) began in 1974. The survey is conducted on a county-by-county basis, and currently includes over 60,000 properties that reflect the rich architectural and historic heritage of Nebraska. The survey is conducted by researchers who drive every rural and urban public road in a county and record each property that meets certain historic and architectural requirements. Surveyors never enter private property without permission. In addition to this fieldwork, surveyors research the history of the area in order to better understand their subject. The NeHBS often includes thematic subjects that may be unique to a certain county, such as an historic highway or type of industry.

The purpose of the NeHBS is to help local preservation advocates, land-use planners, economic development coordinators, and tourism promoters understand the wealth of historic properties in their community. Properties included in the survey have no use-restrictions placed on them, nor does the survey require any level of maintenance or accessibility by property owners. Rather, the survey provides a foundation for identifying properties that may be worthy of preservation, promotion, recognition, and protection within a community.

This publication is the final report for the NeHBS investigation of Platte County. It provides a basis for preservation and planning in Platte County at all levels of government and for individual groups or citizens. Generally, this report includes properties that convey a sense of **architectural** significance. When possible and known, the report also describes properties that have **historical** significance. Although every effort has been made to be accurate, mistakes and omissions may occasionally occur. Additionally, as this project is in part federally funded, the NeSHPO must use federal guidelines when identifying and evaluating historic properties. In short, this publication is not an end in itself, but a beginning for public planners and individuals who value their community's history.

For more information call the NeHBS Program Associate at 402/471-4788 or the NeHBS Coordinator at 402/471-4773.

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

One of the tasks of the NeHBS is to help identify properties that may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is our nation's official list

of significant historic properties. Created by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register includes buildings, structures, districts, objects, and sites that are significant in our history or prehistory. These properties may reflect a historically significant pattern, event, person, architectural style, or archaeological site. National Register sites may be significant at the local, state, or national level.

Properties need not be as "historic" as Mt. Vernon or architecturally spectacular as the Nebraska State Capitol to be listed on the National Register. Historic properties that retain their physical integrity and convey important local significance may also be listed.

It is important to note what listing a property on the National Register means or, perhaps more importantly, what it does not mean. The National Register DOES NOT:

- Restrict a private property owner's ability to alter, manage, or dispose of a property;
- Require that properties be maintained, repaired, or restored;
- Invoke special zoning or local landmark designation;
- Allow the listing of individual private property over an owner's objection; or historic district designation over a majority of property owners' objections;
- Require public access to private property.

Listing a property on the National Register DOES:

- Provide prestigious recognition to significant properties;
- Encourage the preservation of historic properties;
- Provide information about historic properties for local and statewide planning purposes;
- Help promote community development, tourism, and economic development;
- Require owner consent to list a private property;
- Provide basic eligibility for financial incentives, if available.

For more information call the National Register coordinator at 402/471-4788

### CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENTS (CLG)

The primary goal of the NeSHPO is to translate the federal preservation program, as embodied by the National Historic Preservation Act, to the local level. One of the most effective and important tools for this purpose is the Certified Local Government, or CLG,

program. A CLG is a local government, either a county or municipality, that has adopted preservation as a priority. To become a CLG, a local government must:

- Establish a preservation ordinance that includes protection for historic properties at a level the community decides is appropriate;
- Create a commission to oversee the preservation ordinance and the CLG program;
- Promote preservation education and outreach;
- Conduct and maintain some level of historic building surveys;
- Establish a mechanism to locally landmark properties.

There are a number of advantages to achieving CLG status:

- A CLG is eligible to receive matching funds from the NeSHPO that are unavailable to non-CLGs;
- Contributing buildings within locally landmarked historic districts may be eligible for preservation tax incentives (see below) without being listed on the National Register of Historic Places;
- CLGs have an additional tool when considering planning, zoning, and land use issues through their landmarking and survey programs;
- CLGs have the ability to monitor and preserve structures that reflect the community's heritage;
- Finally, a CLG, through its ordinance and commission, has a built-in mechanism to promote pride in an understanding of a community's history.

Designation of a local government for CLG status comes from the NeSHPO and the National Park Service. A community considering CLG status, however, has broad flexibility within the parameters discussed above. The emphasis of the CLG program is **local** management of historic properties with technical and economic assistance from the NeSHPO.

For more information call the CLG coordinator at 402/471-4767.

## PRESERVATION TAX INCENTIVES

Since 1976, the Internal Revenue Code has contained provisions offering tax credits for the certified rehabilitation of income-producing historic properties. Historic properties are defined as those listed on the National Register of Historic Places; or as properties that contribute to the significance of a National Register or locally landmarked (by a CLG, see



above) historic district. An income producing property may be a rental residential, office, commercial, or industrial property.

A certified rehabilitation is, generally, one that conforms to the "Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitation Historic Buildings". The Standards are a common sense approach to the adaptive re-use of historic buildings. It is important to remember that this program promotes the **rehabilitation** of historic properties so that they may be used to the benefit and enjoyment of a community into the twenty-first century. The program is not necessarily intended to **reconstruct** or **restore** historic buildings to exact, as-built specifications.

The tax incentive program in Nebraska has been responsible for:

- The re-investment of millions of dollars towards the preservation of historic buildings;
- The establishment of thousands of low and moderate income housing units as well as upper-end units;
- The adaptive re-use of previously under-utilized or un-utilized historic properties in older downtown commercial areas;
- Helping broaden the tax base;
- Giving real estate developers and city planners a tool to consider projects in older, historic neighborhoods.

Certification of the historic nature of the income-producing property (usually listing the property on the National Register) and certification of the historic rehabilitation are made by both the NeSHPO and the National Park Service. We strongly urge contacting the NeSHPO and a professional tax advisor, legal counsel, or appropriate local IRS office before initiating any activity for a project that anticipates the use of preservation tax incentives.

For more information call the Review and Preservation Services Program Associate at 402/471-4740.

#### FEDERAL PROJECT REVIEW (SECTION 106 REVIEW)

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires that federal agencies take into account the effect of their undertakings on historic properties; seek ways to avoid or reduce adverse effects their projects may have on historic properties; and afford the Federal

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment on the project and its effects on historic properties. The regulations that govern the "Section 106" process also require that the federal agency consult with the NeSHPO to: identify historic properties in the project area; assess the effects a project may have; and to seek ways to avoid or reduce adverse effects to historic properties.

For example, if the Federal Highway Administration, through the Nebraska Department of Roads, contemplates construction of a new highway, they must contact the NeSHPO for assistance in determining whether any sites or structures listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register exist in the project area. Notice that a property need not actually be listed on the register, only appear eligible. This process is to take place early enough in the planning process to allow for alternatives should historic properties be located in the project area: i.e. in the example above, the modification of a new highway's right-of-way could avoid an archaeological site or historic barn.

It is important to note that public participation in this process is vital. The Section 106 process requires the federal agency to seek the views of the public and interested parties if adverse effects to historic properties are discovered through consultation with the NeSHPO. The NeSHPO examines information provided by the federal agency, the NeHBS, and the National Register, but often the most valuable information comes from comments provided by the public. Section 106 was included in the National Historic Preservation Act to protect locally significant historic properties from unwitting federal action. It is truly a law that gives the public a voice in an often unsympathetic bureaucratic system.

For more information about Section 106 review, call the NeSHPO at 402/471-4787.

## PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

The primary function of the NeSHPO is to assist communities in preserving significant buildings, sites, objects, and structures that convey a sense of community history. The most powerful tool available to the NeSHPO in this regard is public education. For this reason, NeSHPO staff spends considerable time conducting public meetings and workshops and disseminating information to the public. The NeSHPO also works with teachers to help design and implement classroom strategies that teach students the value of their local history and heritage.

Our goal is to assist local individuals, groups, and governments to understand, promote, and preserve historic properties. The NeSHPO advocates not only the self-evident aesthetic advantages of historic preservation, but also the potential for preservation to help promote economic development, community planning, tourism, environmental sensitivity, and land-use planning.

The short descriptions included in this introduction to the Platte County Final Report are meant to orient the reader to the NeHBS program within the larger mission of the NeSHPO. As all NeSHPO programs spring from a common source, the National Historic Preservation Act, they work best when they function together, either in whole or in part. For the programs to work at all, they require the interest and participation of the people they are meant to serve.

For more information about the NeSHPO or the programs described above, please call 402/471-4787.

## METHODOLOGY AND HISTORIC INTEGRITY

In September 1995, Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center (MVAC) contracted with the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office (NeSHPO) to conduct the Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey (NeHBS) of Platte County. MVAC initiated the *Reconnaissance Survey and Thematic Survey of Platte County, Nebraska* by attending a preliminary meeting with the NeSHPO staff. At such time, both parties clarified the scope of work to be performed. MVAC staff also performed the prefield research by reviewing, gathering, and/or copying all necessary maps, previous survey forms, and photographic cards, as well as collecting site specific and general background information on Platte County. Other repositories visited during this phase included the Nebraska State Historical Society Archives, Lincoln Public Library, and C.Y. Thompson and Love libraries at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

The field inventory served as the next phase of the project. Prior to initiating the inventory, Barbara Kooiman, Principal Investigator and Elizabeth Butterfield, architectural historian/historian, updated reconnaissance survey forms utilized in the 1994-1995 survey project and gathered new urban maps with the assistance of the NeSHPO staff. A preliminary review of the project area by the MVAC field crew (Kooiman and Butterfield) and NeSHPO (Bill Callahan and Carol Ahlgren) established the existence of any rare or unusual property types in Platte County.

The field inventory criteria utilized by the survey crew was designed by the NeSHPO based on an understanding of relative integrity in the county. Utilizing the criteria, MVAC surveyed all properties appearing to be at least fifty years old (pre-1946) and displaying high integrity of materials, design, location, setting, workpersonship, association, and feeling. Alterations on buildings such as windows, modern siding material (i.e., vinyl, metal, permastone, asbestos), and/or added porches or rear additions, did not generally meet the criteria for survey. The standards of integrity used for houses were more strict than those

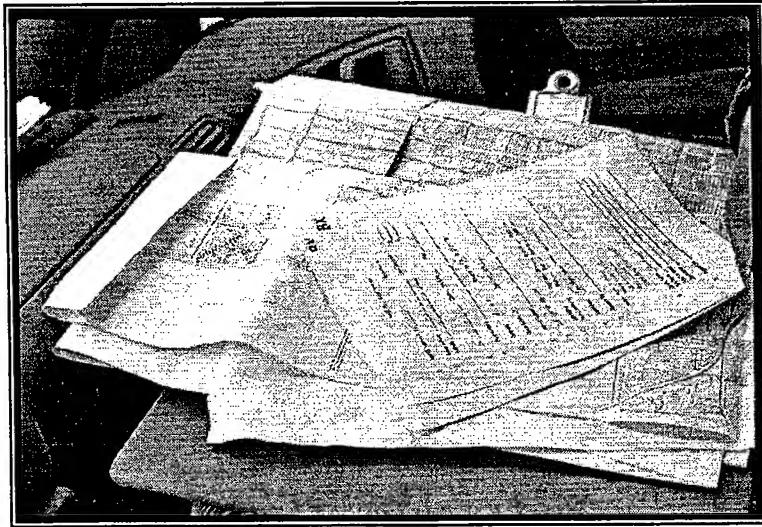


FIGURE 1 - FIELD SURVEY MAPS, NSHS, 1995

used for other property types, such as commercial or industrial buildings. The reason for the stricter integrity guidelines is because houses are much more common in historic buildings surveys, and thus, to keep the inventory at a representative number, the "best" houses, in terms of integrity standards, were considered to be "contributing" to the survey.<sup>1</sup>

Commercial buildings were inventoried even if their

first floor elevations were altered, if the upper stories were intact. In regards to abandoned buildings, MVAC only surveyed properties constructed in the nineteenth century.

In October 1995, the MVAC field crew, consisting of Kooiman and Butterfield, conducted a visual inventory of all properties discernible from the right-of-way. Distant properties were evaluated using binoculars and a telephoto camera lens where necessary. In instances where a property was located a great distance from the road or hidden by trees, surveyors did not inventory the site due to the NeSHPO policy of no trespassing on private property. Every public road was traversed in the county, with the exception of some roads designated as "primitive" on the county highway map. In a situation where a primitive road was overgrown with weeds, the survey crew did not drive the route. Every section mile of road not driven was marked on the field map.

<sup>1</sup> See the Definitions of Architectural Terms and Styles appendix at the end of this report for definitions of the words "contributing" and "noncontributing" in relation to the NeHBS, as well as their definitions in regards to the National Register of Historic Places.

Field inventory included the recordation of each inventoried property on a field map appropriate to its location (i.e. rural, village, and U.S.G.S), photographic documentation of each property in black and white film (35mm film, two 45 degree angle shoots), notation of pertinent facts (i.e., shape, size, height, roof type) on a pre-approved field inventory form.

The completion of the field form included utilizing historic context and property type codes, designated by the NeSHPO, to categorize each property. Once the field survey was completed, the film was processed and corresponding roll and frame numbers were entered onto the field forms. Furthermore, the survey numbers were copied from the field maps onto final maps in pencil and then highlighted with a yellow pencil. Eventually, all of



FIGURE 2 - NESHPO STAFF AT PUBLIC MEETING, NSHS, 1995

this fieldwork information was compiled on one form and entered into the appropriate NeHBS database field.

As part of a special thematic study for the project, MVAC also intensively surveyed properties associated with the Lincoln Highway. This process included all of the above-referenced activities associated with the reconnaissance survey, as well as drawing site plans of each qualifying property and photographing them with color slide film. MVAC also prepared a National Register of Historic Places nomination for the pending Columbus Commercial Historic District. This portion of the project included defining the boundaries of the district, preparing a district map, taking National Register quality black and white photographs and color slides, compiling a property list, researching and writing the historical development of the downtown, describing the architectural significance of the commercial buildings, and reviewing Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, city directories, and *Columbus (Daily) Telegram* newspaper articles to secure construction dates and occupancy data for each property. A compilation of all of this material is contained in the nomination prepared on a computerized 10-900 NPS National Register form.

For both the thematic studies of the Lincoln Highway and the Columbus commercial district, MVAC also systematically researched the *Columbus (Daily) Telegram*, every five years from 1895 to 1945. The newspapers were lent to MVAC on microfilm by the NSHS archives. Collected historic information includes construction dates, public improvements, history of the Lincoln and Meridian highways, county history, and Loup River and Consumers Public Power districts. This information was then organized into thematic files. Site specific information was labeled with a survey number associated with the NeSHPO system. All of the data gathered from the newspapers was incorporated into the Platte County files submitted to the NeSHPO office.

In November 1995, during the field inventory, Kooiman and Butterfield attended a public meeting organized by Bill Callahan, Carol Ahlgren, and John Schleicher of the NSHS at the Platte County Historical Society Museum to introduce county residents to the project. Both the MVAC contractors and NSHS staff explained the purpose of the survey and its related studies, fielded questions from local citizens regarding the purpose of the survey, and collected information from residents about the general history associated with the county and site specific information. While in Platte County, Kooiman and Butterfield also conducted research at local repositories such as the Platte County Historical Society Museum, and the Columbus Public Library.

The final deliverable products for this project, submitted to the NeSHPO in July 1996, included maps, site plans, source files, field survey forms, color slides, photographic negative and contact sheets, and one-hundred copies of the final report.

## SURVEY RESULTS

Final results of the NeHBS of Platte County consisted of a total of 1,047 surveyed properties. MVAC identified fifty-four individual properties and the Humphrey commercial district as potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Previously identified by the NeSHPO, MVAC prepared the Columbus Commercial Historic District for the National Register which consisted of one hundred contributing and twenty-six noncontributing properties. Currently, Platte County boasts thirteen individual properties listed on the National Register. In satisfaction of the thematic portion of the contract, twenty-one properties associated with the Lincoln Highway were identified and intensively surveyed.

## NUMERICAL SUMMARIES OF PLATTE COUNTY RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY<sup>2</sup>

### CONTRIBUTING PROPERTY EVALUATION CHART

Site#/Name Community	Contributing Buildings	Contributing Sites	Contributing Structures	Contributing Objects
PT00- Rural	707	29	27	0
PT01- Columbus	664	4	6	2
PT02- Cornlea	1	1	0	0
PT03- Creston	27	0	1	0
PT04- Duncan	27	1	3	0
PT05- Humphrey	57	0	1	0
PT06- Lindsay	14	0	1	0
PT07- Monroe	22	0	0	0
PT09- Platte Center	25	0	1	0
PT12 Tarnov	19	1	1	0
Total Surveyed	1,563	36	41	2

<sup>2</sup> Please see the Appendix for definitions regarding the words: property; building; site; structure; object; and the NeHBS definition for contributing.

PROPERTY SUMMARY TABLE
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Site#/Name Community	Total of Properties Surveyed Prior to 1995	Properties Added in 1995/1996 Survey	Total Properties Evaluated in 1995/1996
PT00- Rural	71	199	270
PT01- Columbus	200	337	537
PT02- Cornlea	2	1	3
PT03- Creston	16	13	29
PT04- Duncan	11	15	26
PT05- Humphrey	50	28	78
PT06- Lindsay	22	4	26
PT07- Monroe	13	8	21
PT09- Platte Center	26	11	37
PT12- Tarnov	19	2	21
Total <sup>3</sup> Surveyed	430	617	1,047

<sup>3</sup> Total surveyed differs from "properties" surveyed because properties may be made up of several buildings, sites, structures, or objects, such as a farmstead (counted as 1 property) with numerous outbuildings.



## II

# HISTORIC OVERVIEW OF PLATTE COUNTY

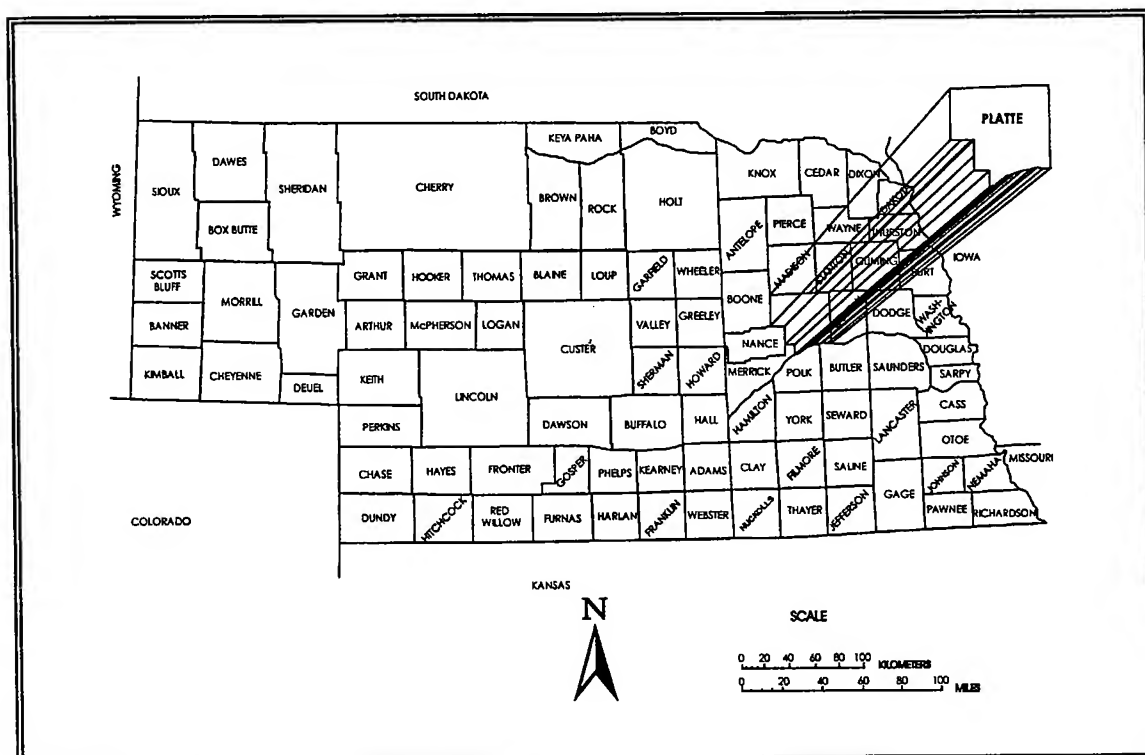


FIGURE 3 - MAP OF NEBRASKA WITH PLATTE COUNTY HIGHLIGHTED

## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

**P**latte County is located in the the eastern one-quarter, which is also the most populated section of Nebraska, seventy-eight miles northwest of the state capital of Lincoln and eighty-four miles west of Omaha, the state's largest city. Platte County, which measures 669 square miles, is surrounded by Stanton and Madison counties to the north, Colfax County to the east, and Nance and Boone counties to the west. The Platte River provides a natural boundary to the county, with Butler, Polk and Merrick counties located

along its southern banks. The Loup River flows in a southeasterly direction through the southern portion of the county until it joins the Platte River just outside of the southeastern limits of Columbus.

The varied landscape of Platte County consists of fertile soils conducive to agriculture. While seventeen percent of the terrain in the southern portion of Platte County is rich bottom land, the northern tier of the county displays both hilly regions, and flat terrain. The natural environment of Platte County is distinguished by James Olson in his *History of Nebraska* into two identified and titled regions. The northern half of the county is in the Loess Hills Region and the southern portion is in the Platte Valley Lowland Region. The soil types in the county mainly consist of Holdrege-Hall, with a northeast sliver displaying Moody and Alluvial located along the southern edge. While Holdrege-Hall soils support a farming industry consisting of corn, alfalfa, and winter wheat as main crops, Moody soils provide excellent conditions for the growth of corn. Alluvial soils, located in the river lowlands, also provide fertile ground.<sup>4</sup>

The weather conditions in Platte County and the surrounding region consist of fluctuating temperatures and amounts of precipitation. The coolest month of the year is January, which is reported with a normal daily high temperature of 31.2 degrees Fahrenheit and low temperature of 9.9 degrees Fahrenheit. The warmest month of the year, July, offers a normal daily maximum temperature of 88.8 degrees Fahrenheit and a minimum of 64.4 degrees Fahrenheit. The majority of precipitation in the county falls between the months of April and September. Both May and June receive the most precipitation of 3.7 inches each month, with the total year at 23.3 inches. June, July, August, September, and October provide the most clear days of the year, with each reflecting double digit figures. September and October report 13.1 days each of cloudless skies from sunrise to sunset.<sup>5</sup>

## NATIVE AMERICAN INHABITANTS

At the eve of Euro-American exploration and eventual settlement of present-day Nebraska, the state was inhabited in three distinct regions by diverse Native American tribes. These

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<sup>4</sup> I. N. Taylor, *History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Columbus, NE: Columbus Republican Print, 1876), 1; James C. Olson, *History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), 7-11.

<sup>5</sup> The weather information is based upon figures reported for a community located within a sixty-five mile radius from Columbus. McKinley Conway and Linda L. Luston, ed., *The Weather Handbook* (Norcross, GA: Conway Data, Inc., 1990), 191.

tribes ranged from sedentary to hunting and gathering lifestyles. The Omaha, Otoe (Oto), Missouri, Iowa, and Ponca Indians inhabited eastern Nebraska; the Pawnee populated central Nebraska; and the Dakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho roamed western Nebraska.<sup>6</sup>

In James C. Olson's *History of Nebraska*, a map of the state, dated approximately 1800, indicates that the Omaha occupied much of present-day Platte County, while the Pawnee and Ponca claimed small portions of it. In terms of lifestyle, the Omaha and Ponca were labeled sedentary and the Pawnee were described as semisedentary due to several large annual hunts. As a result of the settlement of central and east central Nebraska and legislative apportioning of counties including Platte, the Omaha, Ponca, and Pawnee tribes were persuaded to enter into treaties with the federal government. As early as 1854, the Omaha were bound to a reservation. Shortly thereafter, the Ponca entered into a series of treaties and were also placed on a reservation in the state. However, in 1876, the government decided to uproot the Ponca to Indian territory in Oklahoma. Upon removal, the Ponca lost one-third of their band and found the conditions in Oklahoma inadequate. After a long struggle, the Ponca were allowed to return to a reservation on their homeland in Nebraska. Prior to 1857, the Pawnee Indians, consisting mostly of Chaui, Kitkehahki, Pitahauerat, and Skidi bands, entered into three treaties with the federal government. The last treaty resulted in the establishment of a 450 square mile reservation, in central Nebraska. In 1876, following heightened Native American disputes, increased homesteading, and the arrival of the railroad, the Pawnee, like the Ponca, were relocated from Nebraska to Oklahoma. The time frame of the federal government's efforts to remove the Omaha, Ponca, and Pawnee coincided with the formation of Platte County in 1855 and the early settlement of the state.<sup>7</sup>

## BRIEF HISTORY OF NEBRASKA

The Great Plains state of Nebraska holds an important role in the history of the United States. Though today it is thought of primarily as a producer of agricultural products such as grain and livestock, its earlier history is closely linked to its importance as a transportation corridor. After initial exploration of the Great Plains, early travelers used the Platte River Valley as a transportation route, known as collectively as the "overland trail," as well as the

<sup>6</sup> Dorothy Weyer Creigh, *Nebraska: A Bicentennial History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1977), 17-19; James A. Beattie, *School History of Nebraska* (Lincoln, NE: Western Publishing and Engraving Company, 1920), 18-20.

<sup>7</sup> James C. Olson, *History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), 22; Dorothy Weyer Creigh, *Nebraska: A Bicentennial History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1977), 15-16, 73-74.

Mormon, California and Oregon trails. As the region became more heavily settled, the overland trail was replaced by the first transcontinental railroad. The trains brought settlers, and as the populations grew, the necessity for improved roads rose. By the second decade of the twentieth century, the Lincoln Highway traversed both the state and the country, becoming the first east-west transcontinental highway. During the first and second world wars, Nebraska's important transportation routes helped establish the state as the recipient of military bases, air fields, and munitions production plants. Today, in the last decade of the twentieth century, Nebraska boasts a strong and diversified economic base, which has been encouraged and enhanced by its role as a nationally important transportation center.

The earliest contact by non-native people in the Great Plains was made in 1541 by a gold-seeking Spanish explorer named Francisco Vasquez Coronado. Though many historians believe that Coronado actually reached Nebraska, the location of his contact has never been confirmed. Nevertheless, the fact remains that Coronado did investigate the Great Plains, and finding the flat, arid region to be devoid of gold, the Spanish turned their attention elsewhere. Almost two centuries passed before the region of Nebraska was entered by the Spanish in an organized fashion.<sup>8</sup>

The Spanish, who were well-established south of the Rio Grande River by the early 1700s, had heard that the Pawnee were trading with the French on the plains. In an attempt to hinder their French rivals, by 1720 the Spanish sent a small military party to the northern plains, where they crossed the Arkansas River and continued north to the South Platte River. After the party was attacked by the Pawnee, the few survivors returned to Santa Fe. Thereafter, the French were the non-native influence in the plains.<sup>9</sup>

The French first came to the area now known as Nebraska when Father Marquette and Louis Joliet, traveling westward, crossed the Missouri in 1673. By 1739 two explorers, Paul and Pierre Mallet, assuming the Missouri River led to Santa Fe, pursued the route they hoped would lead to trade with the Spanish in New Mexico. Their exploration took them to the Platte, Loup and Republican rivers in present-day Nebraska, and they eventually found their way to Santa Fe.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the French contact in the Great Plains, by 1763 the Treaty of Paris was signed and all of the land west of the Mississippi River became Spanish, while all land east of the

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<sup>8</sup> James C. Olson, *History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), 30.

<sup>9</sup> James C. Olson, *History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), 31.

<sup>10</sup> James C. Olson, *History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), 34.

Mississippi River went to the British. Though the Spanish made several attempts at trading with the plains Indians, they had limited success. By 1800, the Spanish agreed to turn Louisiana back to the French, which led to the Louisiana Purchase, when Napoleon sold land west of the Mississippi River to the United States in 1803.<sup>11</sup>

Almost immediately after the Louisiana Purchase was secured, President Thomas Jefferson sought an appropriation from Congress to send an exploration team to the Louisiana Territory. In May of 1804, the Lewis and Clark expedition began at the confluence of the Mississippi and the Missouri rivers. Though the Lewis and Clark expedition did not extend far into present-day Nebraska, their observations and brief stay at Council Bluffs, in present-day Iowa, led to the establishment of military camps in that vicinity.<sup>12</sup>

Between 1841 and 1866, an estimated three-hundred and fifty thousand settlers traversed the overland trail, seeking opportunities in the west. Initially, based on earlier reports of the beautiful land on the west side of the Rockies, the settlers were headed to Oregon. However, before long, the destinations also included Utah, which was of particular interest to the Mormons, and the 1848 discovery of gold in California led many to try their fortune there. For most travelers, the route began in Independence, Missouri, headed west into present-day Kansas, then followed the Little Blue River to the southwest corner of what is today Gage County, Nebraska, continued west to Adams County, and finally turned north to the Platte River. Travelers followed the Platte River along its flat and wide valley for the next 250 miles, taking the north fork of the waterway, past geographic features such as Courthouse Rock, Jail Rock, Chimney Rock and Scotts Bluff, all in the panhandle of present-day Nebraska. From there, the travelers took their wagon trains into present-day Wyoming, through South Pass in the Rockies, then finally toward their final destinations--Oregon, Utah or California.<sup>13</sup>

In 1854, concurrent with the great migration west, Nebraska became a territory. With this new status, settlement in the new territory increased. The Pre-Emption Act of 1841 allowed an individual to file a claim on 160 acres, live on it for a year, then purchase the title for \$1.25 per acre at a government sale. Veterans of war were allowed to acquire land through military bounty land warrants without necessarily living on the land. In 1854 the Kansas-

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<sup>11</sup> James C. Olson, *History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), 34-37.

<sup>12</sup> James A. Beattie, ed. *School History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: Western Publishing and Engraving Company, 1920), 33-36.

<sup>13</sup> Dorothy Weyer Creigh, *Nebraska: a Bicentennial History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1977), 33-37.

Nebraska Bill allowed settlers to move onto unsurveyed lands, an indication that settlers had occupied land more quickly than the surveyors could map it.<sup>14</sup>

In 1854, the first year lands were sold, 2,732 settlers were reported in the Nebraska Territory. Settlement of the territory occurred somewhat slowly until two important pieces of legislation in 1862 encouraged more homesteading. The Homestead Act and the Pacific Railroad Charter both had immediate and long-term impact on settlement in Nebraska. The 1869 census, counted 28,841 occupants in the Nebraska Territory, and more than three-fourths of those were American-born, mostly from the New England and the mid-Atlantic states.<sup>15</sup>

The Union Pacific Railroad began construction across Nebraska immediately following the conclusion of the Civil War in 1865. The Pacific Charter allowed the railroad company grants of ten and later twenty alternate sections per mile of public domain land, as well as generous, per-mile cash incentives for rail construction. The purpose of these grants was to help alleviate the cost of land acquisition by the railroad companies, and encourage transcontinental railroad development. The Union Pacific rail was laid in stages, with survey crews going ahead of the grading crews, who were in front of the rail-laying crews. By October of 1866, rails were in place west of Cozad, Nebraska, and the project was one year ahead of schedule. By the time Nebraska achieved statehood on 1 March 1867, the railroad spanned the entire length of the state. By 1869, the Union Pacific rails united with those of the Central Pacific Railroad at Promontory, Utah and the transcontinental railroad was completed.<sup>16</sup>

Though other railroads came after the Union Pacific, none captured the great fanfare and attention. The Burlington and Missouri River Railroad began construction in 1869, and reached Denver within a few years. Though the Burlington did not receive the large cash grants given to the Union Pacific, it did secure land grants, which allowed both railroads to establish new communities along the tracks. The Burlington land speculators established planned, permanent communities approximately every ten miles along the tracks. These towns were platted by the railroad companies, with water wells and other services. The

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<sup>14</sup> Dorothy Weyer Creigh, *Nebraska: a Bicentennial History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1977), 55-56.

<sup>15</sup> Dorothy Weyer Creigh, *Nebraska: a Bicentennial History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1977), 60; James C. Olson, *History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), 94-95.

<sup>16</sup> Dorothy Weyer Creigh, *Nebraska: a Bicentennial History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1977), 62-67.

railroad companies then spent enormous amounts of money advertising and promoting the new towns largely toward foreign immigrants.<sup>17</sup>

The Homestead Act of 1862 allowed “any person who is the head of a family, or who has arrived at the age of twenty-one years, and is a citizen of the United States, or who shall have filed his declaration of intention to become such...and who has never borne arms against the United States government or given aid and comfort to its enemies” to file a claim on no more than a quarter section of unappropriated public land. If they continued to live on the land for five years, and were United States citizens, they could receive the final patent for the claim at the end of the fifth year. Though the intent of the Homestead Act was to encourage settlers to come to states and territories such as Nebraska, the act was much abused by land speculators. In reality, by 1900, only fifty-two percent of the land filed for claim by individuals was actually claimed and retained.<sup>18</sup>

Early plains settlers often built shelters out of sod, and built second-generation frame houses when they reached financial stability. Sod houses were built with blocks of soil and grass generally cut from the earth near the house location. These houses, unique to the Great Plains, served efficiently until the fledgling farmers could save enough money to buy lumber in town, shipped from the large lumber mills of Wisconsin and Minnesota. Settlers built their houses using the balloon frame method, which incorporated a “skeleton” of milled lumber boards and a “skin” of clapboard siding. These frame houses were simple to build and sturdy, serving their occupants for many decades.

Throughout the 1870s, due to the length of the growing season and amount of rainfall, the farmers of eastern Nebraska found that crops such as wheat, corn, oats, barley, rye, potatoes, and hay grew best. In addition to traditional farming in the east, during the 1870s the cattle industry was established in the western part of Nebraska. The Western Trail, the route for driving longhorn cattle from Texas to shipping points north, traversed the southwestern part of Nebraska. Ogallala, in Keith County, served as an important Union Pacific way station at the north end of the trail. As the cattle drives ended in the 1880s due to new laws restricting the large drives, the beef industry thrived in the Nebraska's Panhandle. Here, good pasture area was available and the land had been settled in sufficiently low numbers to allow open range ranching. The cattle drives and, later, western Nebraska ranching were

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<sup>17</sup> Dorothy Weyer Creigh, *Nebraska: a Bicentennial History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1977), 68-70.

<sup>18</sup> James C. Olson, *History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), 165-167,

encouraged by rail transportation of livestock and the establishment of packing houses and stockyards in Omaha in the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>19</sup>

Agricultural development continued into the last decades of the nineteenth century. The railroads sold much of their government-acquired land to speculators, who, in turn, offered it at a higher price to the farmers. In 1880 there were 63,389 farms in Nebraska, and by 1890 this number had increased to 113,608. Though in 1880 land in agricultural use had not extended much past Grand Island, a decade later the economic force of agriculture had expanded across the entire state. Corn continued to be the strongest of the crops grown in the late nineteenth century, mostly because it was a high-yield crop, could be fed profitably to livestock, and grew well in the Nebraska climate. Wheat varieties which thrived in the Nebraska climate were not readily available until the 1890s. Nonetheless, once introduced, wheat became an equally important crop.<sup>20</sup>

As noted by historian Frederick Jackson Turner in his famous 1893 thesis entitled "The Significance of the Frontier in American History", the frontier period was coming to an end. Though there were areas of northwestern Nebraska which would not be settled until after the turn of the century, settlement in Nebraska was essentially completed by the early 1890s. The number of farms in the state increased from 113,608 in 1890 to 121,525 in 1900, and 129,678 in 1910. Agricultural land prices increased over this period, and livestock and crop prices doubled and tripled in value. By the turn of the century, new agricultural implements and the introduction of hearty varieties of crops, particularly winter wheat and alfalfa, aided the success of farming in Nebraska. To address the low rainfall in the state, by 1895 the state legislature had created the Board of Irrigation. As a result, by the turn of the century, more than one hundred and fifty thousand acres of land were irrigated.<sup>21</sup>

New land settlement legislation in the early twentieth century continued to influence Nebraska's population. Though the Homestead Act of 1862 worked well in regions of Nebraska best suited for agricultural development, a quarter-section of land was insufficient to support farming in the arid country of northwestern Nebraska. Cattlemen required larger parcels for their ranging livestock. The 1904 Kinkaid Act provided that the homestead units could not exceed 640 acres (one section) in thirty-seven northwestern counties where nearly eight million acres of unclaimed government property still remained. Irrigable lands were excluded from Kinkaid claims. Though available statistics do not sufficiently differentiate

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<sup>19</sup> James C. Olson, *History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), 184, 193-194, 209.

<sup>20</sup> James C. Olson, *History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), 204-206.

<sup>21</sup> James C. Olson, *History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), 258-260.



between Homestead Act claims and Kinkaid Act claims in the northwest, it soon became apparent that even one section of land was insufficient for cattle grazing, where each animal required fifteen to twenty acres.<sup>22</sup>

As Nebraska's population grew in the early decades of the twentieth century, the need for better roads became apparent. In 1904, when the first automobile was sighted in Nebraska, the state reported over seventy-nine thousand miles as public roads. Only thirteen of those miles were improved with stone or clay. By 1910, as more automobiles were on the roads, improvements increased, although seventy-seven counties still reported no improved roads. The Lincoln Highway Association, which formed in 1913 to promote the country's first transcontinental highway, encouraged "all-season" highway improvements along its proposed route. The Lincoln Highway crossed the state of Nebraska, entering at Omaha, and continuing west through Columbus, Grand Island, North Platte and Sidney. Adequate rural roads were finally being built in Nebraska.<sup>23</sup>

As the rural population of Nebraska experimented with the use of motor vehicles, Nebraska farmers also experimented with new crops. They planted sugar beets, potatoes and alfalfa in the Panhandle, and pursued hearty strains of wheat elsewhere in the state. When the United States entered World War I in 1917, the need for food increased dramatically and agricultural prices soared. To take advantage of prices which nearly doubled, Nebraska farmers increased their wheat production, expanding cultivation into southwest counties previously used as pasture lands. When prices continued to rise after the war, Nebraska farmers bought more land, which led to an over-extension of credit in the state by the mid-1920s. By 1923, one-fourth of mortgaged farms failed and, as a result of unstable economic conditions, nearly six-hundred fifty banks closed in the state. By the time the stock market crashed in 1929, Nebraska farmers were already adjusting to hard times.<sup>24</sup>

Though the lack of banks during the 1930s caused hardship for the people of Nebraska, the most devastating aspect of the Great Depression was the unusually harsh weather conditions. Nearly a decade of drought, heat, low rainfall and wind storms devastated Nebraska crops, which led to the necessity for enormous amounts of federal aid. Programs such as the Works

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<sup>22</sup> James C. Olson, *History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), 268-269; James A. Beattie, ed., *School History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: Western Publishing and Engraving Company, 1920), 252.

<sup>23</sup> James C. Olson, *History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), 288-290.

<sup>24</sup> Dorothy Weyer Creigh: *Nebraska, A Bicentennial History* (New York: W.W North & Company, Inc., 1977), 183-185.

Progress Administration (WPA), Public Works Administration (PWA), Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA) and other aid programs assisted destitute Nebraskans through the most challenging decade of the century. Despite the New Deal programs, hundreds of thousands of agricultural acres were abandoned and the state's population dropped by sixty-five thousand between 1930 and 1940.<sup>25</sup>

Despite economic hard times during the Great Depression, the New Deal programs of the 1930s gave an important boost to the rural highways of Nebraska. By 1921 over five thousand miles of road in the state were selected as major highways, and by 1930 the Department of Roads and Irrigation took on the task of graveling and grading as many as eight thousand miles of state roads. The greatest programs in road development in Nebraska took place when the federal relief programs of the New Deal era furthered state highway improvements with over eighty million dollars in funds, while another seventy-seven million dollars went to counties, townships, cities, and villages in the state.<sup>26</sup>

Though the late 1930s proved to be better times for Nebraskans, the early 1940s brought hardship once again as World War II had its home front impact in Nebraska. Though many people left the state in the early 1940s to work in west coast war plants, a number of war-related industries were established in Nebraska as well. Ordnance plants and depots emerged in Grand Island, Hastings, Mead, and Sidney, and the Glen L. Martin Bomber Plant constructed military aircraft south of Omaha. The Army Air Forces established air bases at Alliance, Ainsworth, Bruning, Fairmont, Grand Island, Harvard, Kearney, Lincoln, McCook, Scottsbluff, and Scribner. After the war, Offutt Air Force Base, south of Omaha, became established as the headquarters for the Strategic Air Command during the Cold War era. All of these industries and air fields provided many jobs for both military personnel and civilians throughout the war and many continued well into the Cold War era, through the Korean and Vietnam conflicts.<sup>27</sup>

Present-day Nebraska, which experienced early exploration by the Spanish and French, was acquired by the United States through the 1804 Louisiana Purchase. By the mid-1800s, this region experienced significant westward traffic due to its location along the overland trail. This western migration prompted the construction of railroads through the territory, which led to the platting of many of Nebraska's towns and cities. Twentieth century development of the state benefitted from improved transportation systems and agricultural techniques, as

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<sup>25</sup> Dorothy Weyer Creigh: *Nebraska, A Bicentennial History* (New York: W.W. North & Company, Inc., 1977), 185-187.

<sup>26</sup> James C. Olson, *History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), 288-290.

<sup>27</sup> James C. Olson, *History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), 335.

well as the establishment of military facilities. This ability to modernize allowed Nebraska to overcome economic recessions and support America's position in international affairs.

## PLATTE COUNTY HISTORY

Platte County was named after the river that runs along its southern boundary. Since the Platte River Valley served as a major thoroughfare for immigrants, military troops, and mail carriers traveling west, the county received early exposure to prospective settlers and entrepreneurs. Many people realized the potential of the area as a business center for the high traffic passing across its borders. The settlement of the county was strongly linked to the organization and development of the trading community of Columbus, as well as the

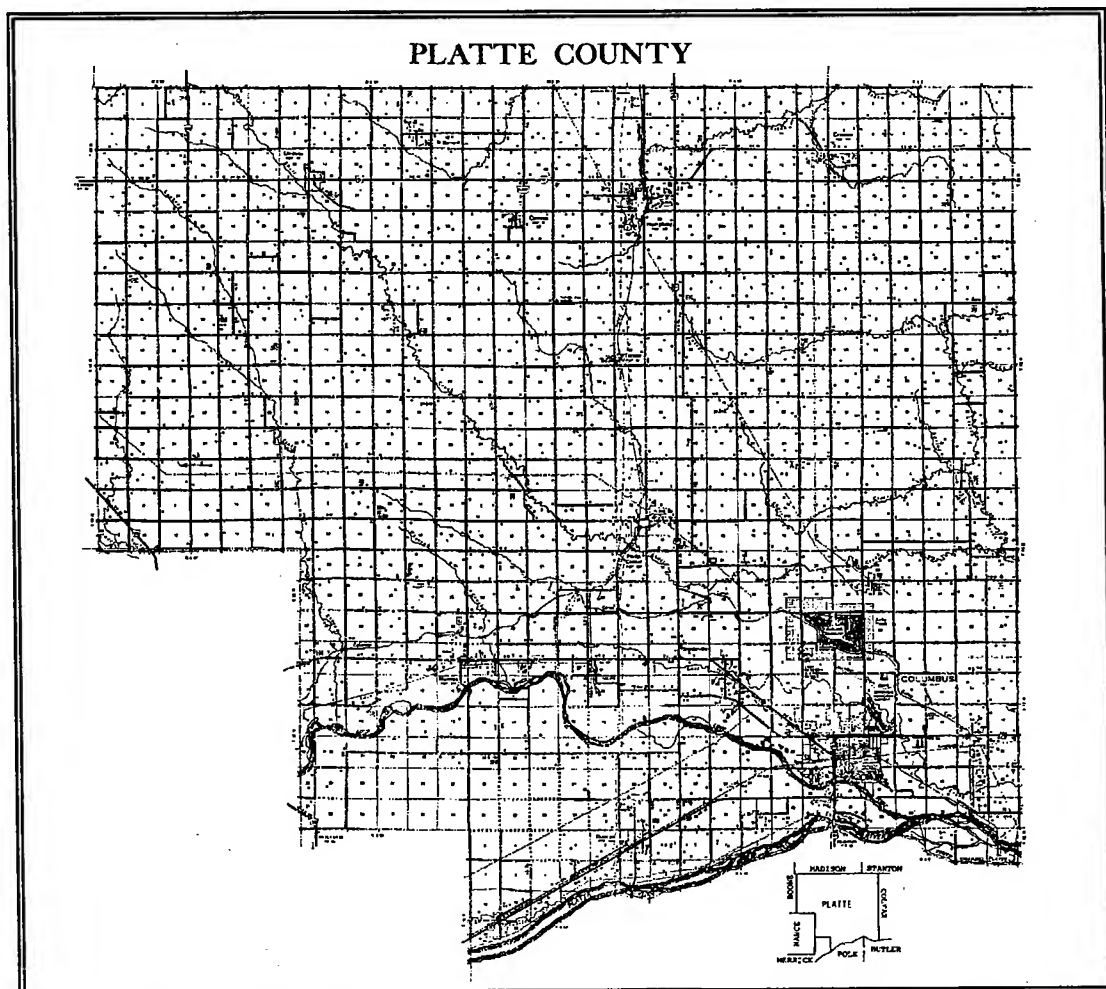


FIGURE 4 - MAP OF PLATTE COUNTY, NEBRASKA

passage of the 1862 Homestead Act which encouraged farming in the region.

Because it was one of the first counties organized in the state, Platte County underwent several boundary changes to accommodate the formation of surrounding counties. In 1855, Platte County was created. Three years later, the borders expanded to consolidate neighboring Monroe County into Platte County. A decade later, to accommodate the formation of Colfax County, Platte lost a portion of its eastern section. Upon its organization, the governing body of Platte County consisted of a three party board of commissioners. In 1878, a county board was instituted to oversee the activities of Platte County, which was comprised of a representative from every township and Columbus. Again, in 1895, the county reorganized into a group of supervisors from seven established districts.<sup>28</sup>

In the mid 1850s, early settlement of Platte County occurred along the Platte River. Realizing the potential of organizing a community along this major migration route, several land companies formed and entered the area seeking adequate town sites. While the Elkhorn & Loup Fork Bridge & Ferry Company platted a town on the north banks of the Loup River and operated a ferry in that location, the Columbus Town Company selected land in the same vicinity for its town. Eventually, the two companies merged to constitute the Columbus Company, and thereafter resurveyed a new town. Following the consolidation in 1856, the county reported a population of thirty-five. Three years later, the number of people in Platte County jumped to 782.<sup>29</sup>

Three major factors caused the county's population to nearly double by 1870. First, the 1862 Homestead Act provided free land to settlers. Second, the conclusion of the Civil War resulted in many veterans heading west to start new lives. Third, in 1866 the Union Pacific Railroad completed tracks as far west as Columbus. In approximately a ten-year period, the county's population had increased by 1,117 with the 1870 census reporting a figure of 1,899.<sup>30</sup> The people settling the county were described by I.N. Taylor, in an article entitled "Pioneer Days in Platte." He wrote:<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> I. N. Taylor, *History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Columbus, NE: Columbus Republican Print, 1876), 1; Margaret Curry, *The History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Culver City, CA: Murray & Gee, 1950), 415.

<sup>29</sup> G.W. Phillips, ed., *Past and Present of Platte County, Nebraska* (Chicago, IL: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1915), 46-48, 73.

<sup>30</sup> G.W. Phillips, ed., *Past and Present of Platte County, Nebraska* (Chicago, IL: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1915) 51-52.

<sup>31</sup> "Pioneer Days in Platte," *Columbus Telegram* 24 February 1905.

...from southeast to southwest, that the sons of Johnny Bull, whether English or Scotch, have the lower Platte valley, and the Mormons lead; the Germans possess the lower Shell Creek valley with all its tributaries, and are mostly Lutherans; the northeast and Tracy valley are Yankees, and are largely Presbyterians; the Irish have the upper Shell Creek valley and the lower north shore of the Loup, and are Catholics; the Scandinavians possess the upper Looking Glass and Lost Creek and are mostly Lutheran.

In the 1880s, Platte County railroad activity was enlarged with the arrival of three lines. The Union Pacific entered Platte County as early as 1866 and it did not encounter competition from other railroads until more than a decade later. In 1880, the Burlington & Missouri Railroad completed a branch to Columbus known as the Lincoln & Northwestern. Stops along this line included Seward and David City. One year later, tracks of the Omaha, Niobrara & Black Hills Railroad entered Platte County and connected it to Norfolk and Albion. During this decade, the Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley Railroad also passed through the county and provided transportation stops in the communities of Lindsay, Cornlea, and Creston.<sup>32</sup>

Although railroad companies operated specifically to enlarge rail transportation, they also made money from the development of towns as trade centers along the tracks. In order to establish a thriving commercial hub, railroad companies solicited businesses to open in the fledgling communities. The land companies quickly realized that the best way to entice business people into the area was to provide a well-laid out plat. One of the first types of railroad town designs involved the business district abutting the tracks. A later plan, known as the T-town, consisted of the main street running perpendicular to the tracks. This was one of the most popular types of railroad town design in the country. This plan often designated lots along the tracks specifically for railroad activity, such as grain elevators and depots. Based upon many railroad town maps, the half blocks facing the main street were divided into twelve lots and residential blocks contained a total of twelve lots. This indicated the obvious intention of the group who prepared the plat as to where the commercial district as opposed to the residential district would develop. While the T-shaped layout usually placed the depot at the end of the business district along the tracks, public institutions were generally located on the outskirts of the plat. This left the core of the plat open for commercial development.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> G.W. Phillips, ed., *Past and Present of Platte County, Nebraska* (Chicago, IL: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1915), 127-129.

<sup>33</sup> Michael P. Conzen, ed., *The Making of the American Landscape* (Winchester, MA: Unwin Hyman, Inc., 1990), 182-184.

Based upon the design of most communities in Platte County, it is apparent that the railroad was instrumental in placement, development, and growth. In 1870, the only community census reported in the county was Columbus. By the next decade, Platte Center reported forty-seven people. In 1890, following the height of railroad construction, Creston, Humphrey and Lindsay were all listed on the census rolls. This represents one of the largest population increases experienced in the county, as the census reported an increase in 1880

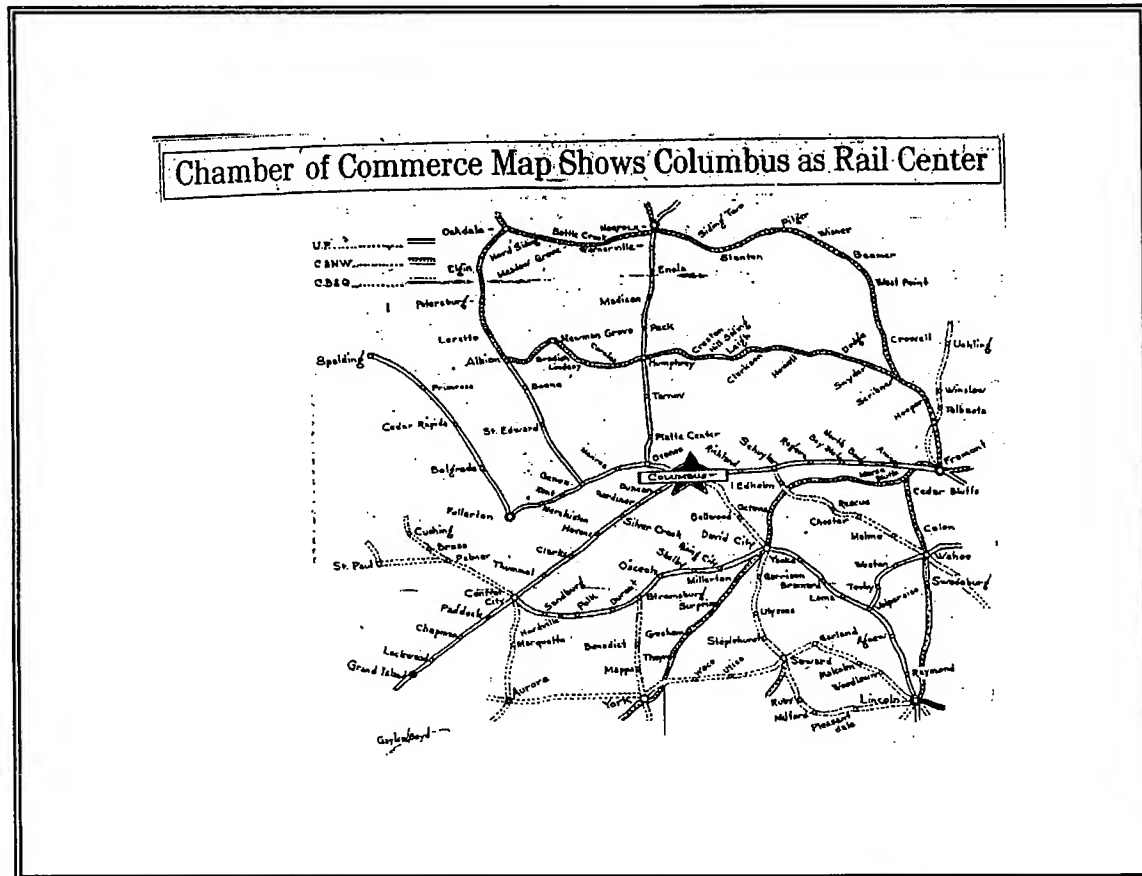


FIGURE 5 - MAP OF RAILROADS IN PLATTE COUNTY, NEBRASKA, *COLUMBUS DAILY TELEGRAM*, 2 DECEMBER 1925

of 9,511, which rose to 15,437 by 1890. Humphrey, which boasted an initial population of 691, would continually serve as the second largest community in the county after Columbus. At the turn of the century, Monroe reported its first census at 214 and by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, Cornlea and Tarnov also reported population figures. The

last community to be registered on the census rolls was Duncan in 1920.<sup>34</sup> Based upon the population statistics, it is apparent that the period between the turn of the century and the Great Depression marks the largest overall growth for incorporated communities in Platte County. From World War II to the present, when people moved away from the small communities, Columbus experienced significant increases in population. In 1990, Columbus and Duncan were the only communities to show peak population figures and both Cornlea and Tarnov dropped to approximately half of their first census numbers after incorporation. Out of all the communities in Platte County, Humphrey has displayed the least amount of fluctuation in its population statistics.

Hildegard Binder Johnson, in a work entitled "Towards a National Landscape,"<sup>35</sup> noted that at the turn of the century, "the nation with the greatest railway system in the world had the worst roads." This neglect of the nation's road system, however, underwent significant changes with the enactment of the Federal Highway Act in 1916. Johnson recounted that the new act, which was promoted by the American Automobile Association, involved federal funds to be used for road maintenance and construction. With the changing legislation and growing emphasis on automotive transportation in the country, Platte County communities benefitted from their positioning on the transcontinental Lincoln Highway (aka U.S. Highway 30), which ran east-west, and the north-south Meridian Highway (aka U.S. Highway 81). While the Lincoln Highway connected New York City to San Francisco, the Meridian Highway connected Winnipeg, Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. Columbus was the only community in the country situated along both roads. Platte Center, Tarnov, and Humphrey were within two miles west of the Meridian Highway and Creston was located approximately five miles to the east. The Lincoln Highway in Platte County passed through Columbus and crossed the Loup River and then traveled along the north side of the Platte River and passed through Duncan. Even though Monroe was located on neither the Lincoln nor Meridian highways, it was on the Columbus and Genoa Road (aka State Highway 22) and had ample access to Columbus and the prominent national highways. Historically, the most secluded community from the county seat of Columbus was Lindsay, located in the

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<sup>34</sup> Addison E. Sheldon, ed., *The Nebraska Blue Book and Historical Register 1920* (Lincoln, NE, December, 1920), 391-401; Clerk of the Legislature, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book 1990-1991* (Lincoln, NE: Clerk of the Legislature, 1990), 783, 856; Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau, *The Nebraska Blue Book* (Lincoln, NE, December 1930), 334-339; Nebraska Legislative Council (comp.), *Nebraska Blue Book 1952* (Lincoln, NE, December, 1952), 356-360.

<sup>35</sup> In Michael P. Conzen, ed., *The Making of the American Landscape* (Winchester, MA: Unwin Hyman, Inc., 1990), 139.

northwest corner. It is sited approximately twelve miles west of the Meridian Highway in the northern portion of the county.<sup>36</sup>

The physical landscape of the county reflected the emerging popularity of the automobile. Roadside businesses, such as motor courts/motels, campgrounds, gas stations, and service garages were erected along the Lincoln and Meridian highways in Platte County to accommodate travelers. Since good road conditions ensured higher numbers of travelers, which resulted in an increase of commerce for local businesses, Platte County residents often spent their own time and money for road upkeep. Eventually, the state and federal governments allocated funds for the paving of highways throughout the county. In 1940, the *Columbus Daily Telegram* reported that the Lincoln and Meridian highways, as well as state highways 22 and 64 were "paved out of Columbus." Later, following the construction of the Interstate Highway system, the importance of early transcontinental roads declined. This resulted in the closing and abandonment of many roadside facilities in Platte County.<sup>37</sup>

Since agriculture served as the economic foundation of the county, changing land values and crop prices provide an understanding of the financial history of the area. In 1859, to answer the demands of travelers along the overland trail, the price of hay in Platte County reached fifty dollars a ton. These high prices enticed an increasing number of people to farm in Platte County. With the arrival of several railroads through the 1860s and 1880s, Platte County had access to larger and more distant markets. Thus, farmers continued to prosper and even created cooperative programs to ensure high prices for their agricultural products. By the 1890s a drought, which resulted in an economic depression, struck the area and the price of corn sagged to approximately ten cents a bushel. Following the turn of the century, conditions began to improve, and by 1906 an acre of land sold for as much as ninety dollars. During World War I, land prices in Platte County became inflated and tripled in value over the previous decade. Unlike many farmers in the country, residents of Platte did not buy more land with their wartime profits. Instead, they either saved the money or used it to purchase equipment or modern amenities. As a result, by 1930, Platte County's farming community boasted 368 farmsteads with private light plants and 46 with power lines, as well as 410 homes with water lines. Farms in the county also possessed 901 radios, 1,705 telephones, 1,629 cream separators, 456 incubators, 400 brooders, and 51 silos. Frugality

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<sup>36</sup> Drake Hokanson, *The Lincoln Highway* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988), 14; George Koster, *A Story of Highway Development in Nebraska* (Lincoln, NE: Department of Roads, 1985), 15.

<sup>37</sup> "Columbus is Ideal as Place to Live, Work," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 16 September 1940; "Interstate 80 Construction Is Moving Ahead," *Grand Island Daily Independent* 17 October 1965.



and efforts to modernize helped Platte County residents weather the tough times which befell the entire state during the Great Depression of the 1930s.<sup>38</sup>

The federal government established several programs to assist those adversely affected by the Great Depression. The farmers of Platte County benefitted from a variety of these New Deal projects. By the mid 1930s, 2,329 farms in the county had the potential for implementing pasture furrows and eventually terracing, rotating crops, and irrigating with the assistance of the Shell Creek Soil Conservation district and the Columbus Veterans Conservation Corps. The Veterans Conservation Corps, originally formed to construct dams and gullies, was located at Camp Platte (PT00-023).<sup>39</sup> At the end of the decade, another soil conservation project was implemented under the direction of the U.S. Forest Service. This project provided Platte County farmers with three hundred twenty-five thousand trees for the creation of shelter belts. These belts of trees provided farm fields protection from the wind. Besides farm-related ventures, Platte County also benefitted from the Works Progress Administration (WPA), a New Deal program. WPA provided laborers in the county for a number of road construction projects, which included both graveling and grading. Furthermore, it aided in the improvement of public parks, installation of sewage systems in rural communities, and the maintenance of schools and surrounding grounds.<sup>40</sup>

One of the largest New Deal-funded projects in Platte County was the harnessing of hydroelectric power from the Loup River. In 1932, a group of local business people reviewed plans drafted just after the turn of the century regarding the placement of a dam at the current location of Lake Babcock (PT00-270). Although it was obvious these plans were obsolete, the enthusiastic group solicited the help of nearby engineers on a contingency basis. Fred Albert, an engineer on leave from South America, and George E. Johnson, a former engineer for the state of Nebraska, collaborated in drafting the new plans for the power district. In an effort to receive funding from the federal government, the group submitted an application to Washington, D.C. in June of 1933. Three months later, the Public Works

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<sup>38</sup> Margaret Curry, *The History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Culver City, CA: Murray & Gee, 1950), 329-335; "More Conveniences on Nebraska Farms," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 25 March 1930.

<sup>39</sup> NeHBS site numbers are identified like this throughout the text, indicating the number of a contributing site as it is mentioned. Site numbers are based on the county code (PT for Platte), community code (i.e. 00 for rural, 01 for Columbus, 02 for Duncan, etc.), and the sequence in that county and community in which it was inventoried, resulting in the final site number. Site numbers are used to identify sites within the NeHBS database.

<sup>40</sup> Margaret Curry, *The History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Culver City, CA: Murray & Gee, 1950), 334-335; "Forest Service Has 325,000 Trees For Platte County," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 30 December 1939; "Reviews Work at Veterans Camp During the Year," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 22 October 1925; "Seven Projects in Platte County Get WPA Authorization," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 27 November 1935.

Administration (PWA) reviewed the plans and Philip R. Hockenberger and Fred Albert traveled to Washington, D.C. to promote the project. On 15 November 1933, the government granted a loan of \$7.3 million to the Loup River Public Power project. By the summer of 1934, Harza Engineering Company of Chicago began overseeing construction of the project. In the spring of 1937, the power for one of the large turbines at the Monroe power house (PT00-168) was turned on. During the late 1930s and early 1940s, the Loup River Public Power District enlarged its service radius with several more grants from the federal government.<sup>41</sup>

During 1940 and 1941, the Loup River Public Power District constructed a headquarters building (PT01-137), in downtown Columbus. This building also housed branches of the Consumers Public Power District and the Nebraska Public Power System. The Consumers Public Power District, formed in 1939 with board members from the Loup District, was utilized to market the electricity generated by the hydroelectric powerhouses. Three years later, the board also formed the Cornhusker

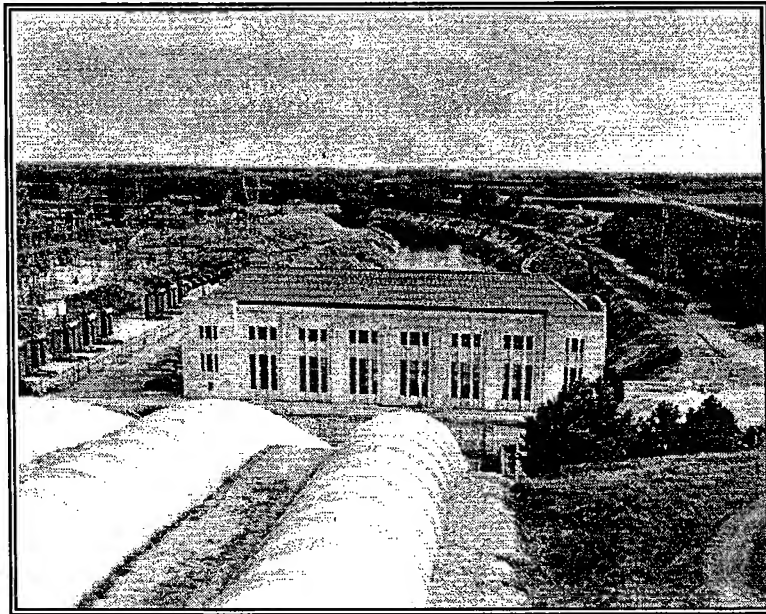


FIGURE 6 - LOUP RIVER PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT  
POWERHOUSE (PT00-230), COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, CA.  
1940, NSHS

Rural Public Power District to provide services to rural residents.<sup>42</sup>

An excellent power provider, the Loup River Public Power District enhanced the industrial development of Platte County. Between 1940 and 1949, thirteen new factories opened in the county. This industrial development, which provided new jobs, enabled Platte County to continually grow and diversify. During a forty-year period, 1950 to 1990, population figures

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<sup>41</sup> Margaret Curry, *The History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Culver City, CA: Murray & Gee, 1950), 395-399.

<sup>42</sup> Margaret Curry, *The History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Culver City, CA: Murray & Gee, 1950), 399-405.

increased from 19,910 to 29,820. This 9,910 addition in people shows the impact of new industrial development on the county.<sup>43</sup>

Platte County, which was settled prior to Nebraska's statehood, experienced early exposure to Euro-Americans as a result of its location along the overland trail. With its economic livelihood entrenched in agriculture, Platte County prospered with the opening of distant markets which resulted from the arrival of a number of railroad lines between the 1860s and 1880s. Within the first few decades of the twentieth century, the transportation system in the country was enhanced by the creation of the Lincoln and Meridian highways through the United States. Similar to other agricultural-based areas, Platte County was affected by national events such as the Great Depression and the world wars. One of the most significant outcomes from the national economic upheaval caused by the depression was the federal financing of the Loup River Public Power District by the New Deal programs in the 1930s. The creation of the Loup River Public Power District enabled the county to provide adequate power to rural and urban areas and thereby, support both a solid economy and continually burgeoning population figures.

#### PLATTE COUNTY POPULATION STATISTICS

1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990
1,899	9,511	15,437	17,747	19,006	19,464	21,181	20,191	19,910	23,992	26,544	28,852	29,820

<sup>43</sup> Margaret Curry, *The History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Culver City, CA: Murray & Gee, 1950), 389; Clerk of the Legislature, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book 1990-1991* (Lincoln, NE: Clerk of the Legislature, 1990), 783.

## PLATTE COUNTY VILLAGES, TOWNS, AND CITIES

### COLUMBUS

Columbus is located in southeastern Platte County. The Loup River runs along the city's southern limits and joins with the Platte River at the southeast edge of Columbus. Major thoroughfares providing access to Columbus include U.S. Highway 30 (aka Lincoln Highway) which runs in a zigzag pattern from the northeast corner to the southwest edge of the community, and U.S. Highway 81 (aka Meridian Highway) which stretches north and south along the western side of the community.

During the mid-1800s, in an effort to build a community west of Omaha on the proposed path of the Union Pacific railroad, a group of twelve settlers from Ohio formed the Columbus Town Company (aka Columbus Township Company) in Omaha. In 1856, under the direction of the company, an expedition consisting of Frederick Gottschalk, Adam Denk, Jacob Louis, and George Rousche headed west to select a town site. Since the site of Columbus was near the town of Pawnee City,<sup>44</sup> which provided a ferry across the Loup River, the Columbus Town Company and the Elkhorn & Loup Fork Bridge & Ferry Company merged. Shortly thereafter, the original townsite of Columbus was surveyed in a grid pattern and divided into 155 blocks, which were subdivided into eight lots each. The company immediately began efforts to increase the size of its population, such as donating stock for both the erection of a saw mill and awarding stock to the first woman settler, as well as giving gift lots to brick yards and for large homes. Free lots were also given to regional newspapers that advertised Columbus as a favorable community for settlers. By 1857, a post office began operating in the area and by winter provided service to a total of thirty-five people.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> The above-mentioned Pawnee City, which was located near present-day Columbus, should not be confused with Pawnee City in Pawnee County, Nebraska.

<sup>45</sup> Elton A. Perkey, "Perkey's Names of Nebraska Locations," *Nebraska History* 59 (Fall 1978): 453; Irene O'Brien, *Columbus 1992: A Snapshot* (N.p., 1992), 6; "Platte County, Columbus Time Line," (1980): 1. Located at the Columbus Public Library, NE; John W. Reps, *Cities of the American* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), 412.

During the 1850s and 1860s, Columbus grew rapidly with the arrival of the railroad and continued recruitment efforts by the Columbus Town Company. In June of 1866, the Union Pacific Railroad tracks reached Columbus. In *Nebraska History: A Bicentennial* the author Dorothy Weyer Creigh wrote:<sup>46</sup>

The rail gang reached Columbus on a Sunday, pushing hard to make up for delays earlier, and laid two miles of track that day with the whole town watching, seventy-five men, women, and children missing Sabbath services to see the progress of the rail crews. Later, when the first commercial freight came along the tracks, the Union Pacific superintendent donated a load of pine lumber from it to the Congregational Church, possibly in atonement.

Understanding the importance of its location as a trade center on the main line of the Union Pacific, the Columbus Town Company's promotion of the community included procuring money for the erection of a hotel and school, offering lots for the construction of churches, and in 1867, providing ten acres for the location of the state capital. Although the state capital did not locate in Columbus, the site became the home of the original county courthouse. The fact that the founders of Columbus had grand ideas for the community was referenced in John W. Reps' work entitled *Cities of the American West: A History of Frontier Urban Planning*. Reps' observation of Columbus noted that, "the little town. . .with its scattered development on a gridiron pattern interrupted diagonally by a steep escarpment scarcely suggests that it once cherished the hope of becoming a major metropolis."<sup>47</sup>

In the 1870s, Columbus served as a trade center for eight neighboring counties, as well as an increasing population which more than tripled during the decade. Furthermore, as a result of the 1875 gold rush in the Black Hills, local business people capitalized on their location and promoted Columbus as an "outfitting and caravan" center. Due to the efforts of Columbus retailers, eastern newspapers advertised a train ride to Columbus, followed by a profiteer guided overland excursion as an alternate route to the Black Hills gold fields. Obviously, the miners were expected to equip themselves in Columbus instead of traveling with their goods across the county. Columbus boasted handling one million, ninety-five thousand dollars worth of business during the decade. This figure was approximately eighty thousand dollars greater than the previous decade. As a result of this prosperity and the

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<sup>46</sup> Dorothy Weyer Creigh, *Nebraska: A Bicentennial History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1977), 65.

<sup>47</sup> John W. Reps, *Cities of the American West* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), 412-413; Jane Graff, coor., *Nebraska Our Towns...Central Northeast* (Dallas, TX: Taylor Publishing Co., 1990), 119.



FIGURE 7 - COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, ELEVENTH STREET,  
1873, PCHS

realization that their community was well-established, organizers of the Columbus Town Company disbanded its group.<sup>48</sup>

The photograph to the left depicts the commercial district of Columbus, located along Eleventh Street, during the 1870s. These false-front, frame buildings, between one and two stories tall, housed a variety of businesses such as dry-goods, grocery, boot and shoe stores, saloon, and harness shop. The store

fronts, which consisted of multi-pane windows, each accommodated only one business with the exception of one building. Wood sidewalks connected all of the buildings along the same side of the street and hitching posts abutted the walkways. Signage for the businesses along Eleventh Street jutted out over the walkway and provided eye-catching advertisements.

Prosperity and growth continued in Columbus during the 1880s and 1890s. Newly developed communication and transportation lines offered residents broader markets. In the early 1880s, the Nebraska Telephone Company began servicing Columbus and tracks of the Omaha, Niobrara and Black Hills Railroad reached the community. The presence of the rails helped encourage the enlargement of livestock production to accommodate Omaha markets, the erection of a pork packing plant and a creamery, and the sale of grain by area merchants to international markets. By the mid 1880s, Columbus also benefitted from municipal improvements, including a water system and electric light companies. Columbus, which was evolving into a full service commercial center, boasted the erection of a variety of buildings totaling \$127,575 in 1886. By the next decade, Columbus supported a wooden shoe factory,

<sup>48</sup> Margaret Curry, *The History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Culver City, CA: Murray & Gee, 1950), 52; Addison E. Sheldon, ed., *The Nebraska Blue Book and Historical Register, 1920* (Lincoln, NE, December, 1920), 391; "Early Settlers Had Market at Own Door," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 17 September 1940; "Platte County, Columbus Time Line," (1980): 4. Located at the Columbus Public Library, Columbus, NE.

foundry and machine shop, brewery, creamery, windmill factory, sewerage and drainage company, two flour mills, and several railroad shops.<sup>49</sup>

After the turn of the century, Columbus was entrenched as a commercial center. The town offered its customers a wide range of services and products. In 1905, commercial businesses housed in Columbus included forty different types of enterprises such as factories, wholesale houses, retail and grocery stores, restaurants, saloons, hotels, lumber yards, implements, newspapers, opera houses, a commercial college, and gas plant.<sup>50</sup>

Residential development in Columbus coincided with the commercial success of the area. The earliest neighborhoods in Columbus developed near the north bank of the Loup River. However, when the tracks of the Union Pacific arrived, residential neighborhoods developed further north near the railroad tracks. Many of the extant high style houses in Columbus, which were erected around the turn of the century, reside within a few blocks north of downtown. Architecturally significant styles in the community include Queen Anne (PT01-040; PT01-058; PT01-149; PT01-154; PT01-187), Italianate (PT01-049), Tudor Revival (PT01-153; PT01-170), and Dutch Colonial Revival (PT01-161). Vernacular form homes, such as front gable (PT01-201), side gable (PT01-209), gable ell (PT01-210), cross gable (PT01-047), gable T (PT01-205), two-story cubes (PT01-158; PT01-397), and one-story cubes (PT01-168) are mainly located on the outer edge of the high style neighborhood and on the south side of the railroad tracks. Several decades after the turn of the century, standard plan Bungalows (PT01-385) and American Foursquares (PT01-059; PT01-164; PT01-388; PT01-390) were common

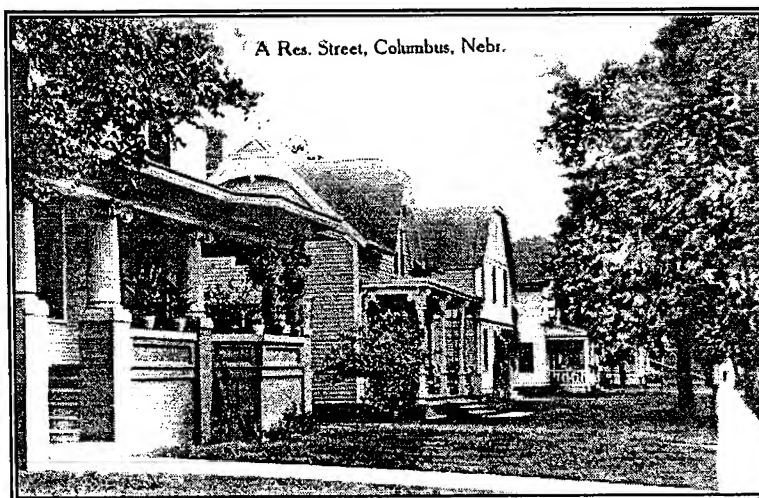


FIGURE 8 - RESIDENTIAL STREET, COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, 1914, ZIMMERMAN COLLECTION

<sup>49</sup> Margaret Curry, *The History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Culver City, CA: Murray & Gee, 1950), 48, 50, 51, 54-55; "Platte County, Columbus Time Line," (1980): 5. Located at the Columbus Public Library, Columbus, NE.

<sup>50</sup> "Platte County, Columbus Time Line," (1980): 8. Located at the Columbus Public Library, Columbus, NE; Margaret Curry, *The History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Culver City, CA: Murray & Gee, 1950), 59.

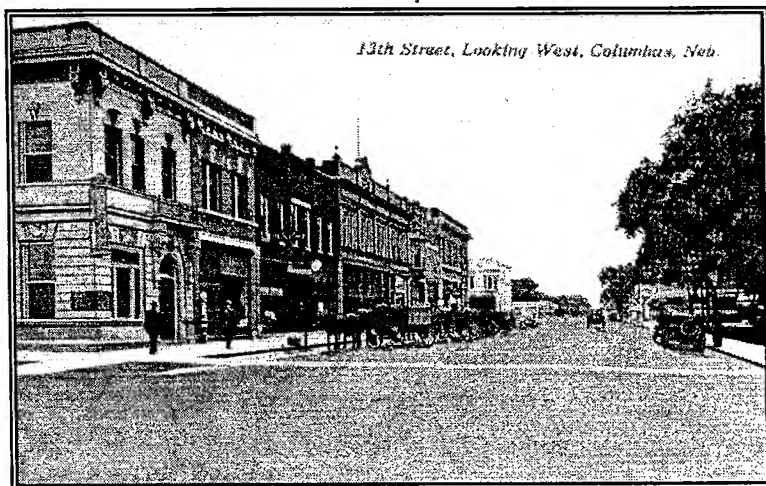


FIGURE 9 - THIRTEENTH STREET LOOKING WEST, COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, CA. 1915, ZIMMERMAN COLLECTION

styles erected within the vernacular neighborhoods. One of the last architectural trends popular in Columbus prior to World War II is the Picturesque style. Characterized with brick veneer exteriors, asymmetrical rooflines, and no eaves, a large number of these houses (PT01-534 through PT01-537) were built on the northern lots of the original platted blocks.<sup>51</sup>

By the second decade of the century, commercial activity in Columbus surged due to its location on the Lincoln and Meridian highways. The condition of roads through Columbus and the roadside services offered to travelers were often reported in national guidebooks published by "good roads" associations. Therefore, it was important for Columbus to display modern conveniences to entice tourists to travel through the area. The most visible, high traffic areas in Columbus included Thirty-third Avenue along the Meridian Highway, and sections of the path of the Lincoln Highway which included Lewis Street (Twenty-third Avenue), Thirteenth Street, and Platte Avenue (aka Twenty-seventh Avenue). These areas received much attention from local business people and city officials. As early as 1913, shortly after the inception of the Lincoln Highway, the Evans Hotel was erected at the northwest corner of Thirteenth Street and Platte Avenue. It is unclear whether the hotel was planned before or after the

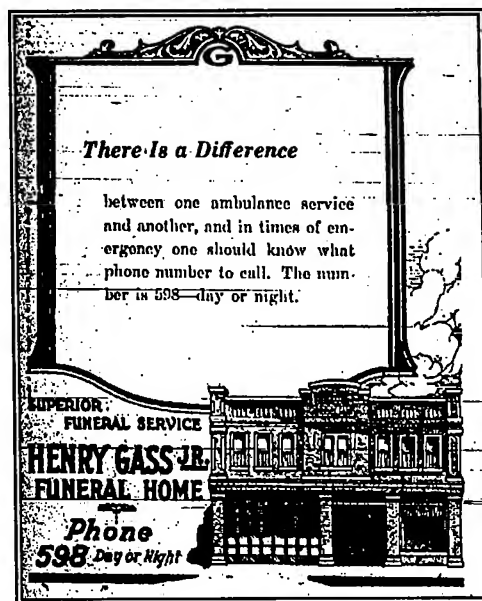


FIGURE 10 - HENRY GASS, JR. FUNERAL HOME ADVERTISEMENT, COLUMBUS DAILY TELEGRAM, 16 OCTOBER 1925

<sup>51</sup> Since a large number of residential buildings were identified during the survey, this paragraph only contains representative examples of houses. The majority of the houses in this section were derived from the list of potentially eligible individual properties in Columbus.



placement of the Lincoln Highway route. Other municipal improvements in the downtown included electric lighting in 1913. One year later, with the passage of a thirty thousand dollar bond, officials undertook efforts to pave city streets. By the next decade, the route of the Lincoln Highway through downtown was paved and featured a variety of new garages, filling stations, and auto dealers.<sup>52</sup>

Prior to America's involvement in World War I, Columbus' construction industry flourished. In 1915, construction figures totaled \$95,200 and one year later fifty-two building permits were issued and construction costs reached \$171,915. This construction resulted in the addition of Swan Theater (PT01-097), W.C. Butt's Drug Store (PT01-096), and the Henry Ragatz Building (PT01-094) to the downtown. Even in 1917, construction expenditures in Columbus equaled \$104,825 which included the erection of the Baker and Graves Building (PT01-467), Gerrard & Dussel Building (PT01-117), Phillips' Building (PT01-099), Commercial National Bank (PT01-108), Farmer's State Bank (PT01-107), and Columbus Fuel and Storage (PT01-088).<sup>53</sup>

With the onset of World War I, restrictions were placed on commercial activities in Columbus. In 1918, the *Columbus Telegram* listed rules and regulations dictated by the National War Industries Board. One of the rules was that business owners could not construct or remodel any building without the permission of the board. This was an attempt to conserve construction materials for the war effort. Furthermore, businesses were put on an earlier closing schedule to conserve fuel.<sup>54</sup> Despite the war, two new buildings, the Phillips & Freidhof Building (PT01-098) and Columbus Steam Laundry (PT01-468), were constructed in 1918.

After the war, building expenditures rose and by 1920 and 1921 funds spent on construction totaled \$557,805 and \$400,000 respectively. The most prominent buildings constructed

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<sup>52</sup> *Official Automobile Blue Book, 1920* (New York: The Automobile Blue Book Publishing Co., 1920), 51-53; *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway* (Detroit, MI: The Lincoln Highway Association, Inc., 1924), 383-384; *80 Years of Progress, Columbus, Nebraska, 1856-1936* (Columbus, NE: The Art Printery, 1936), 21; Margaret Curry, *The History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Culver City, CA: Murray & Gee, 1950), 59; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Map of Columbus, Nebraska* (1925); "Two Blocks of Thirteenth...." *Columbus Telegram* 19 November 1915; "Will Start Paving In July," *Columbus Telegram* 11 May 1917; "Getting Ready for Pavement," *Columbus Telegram* 29 June 1917.

<sup>53</sup> "Set New Record in Building," *Columbus Telegram* 5 January 1917; "1917 was Active Building Year," *Columbus Telegram* 28 December 1917. Site Files located at the NeSHPO. These site files contain a compilation of information, including Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, city directory citations and newspaper articles, which were used to determine construction dates for particular buildings.

<sup>54</sup> "Non War Construction," *Columbus Telegram* 11 October 1918; "Put Business On War Basis," *Columbus Telegram* 11 January 1918; Site Files located at the NeSHPO.

during this period were the Platte County Courthouse (PT01-001), Evans Hospital (altered, not surveyed), Gottberg Auto Company Garage (PT01-003), and Globe Savings & Loan Association (PT01-486). At the end of the decade, in 1929, construction totals reached \$234,835, with a part of the expenditure spent on the erection of the McCullough Motor Company Garage (PT01-136). One year later, despite the onset of the Great Depression, building reached approximately \$850,000 including a viaduct over the Union Pacific mainline tracks, Immanuel United Evangelical Lutheran Church (PT01-135), the swimming pool in Pawnee Park (PT01-529), and the Nebraska Continental Telephone Company Building (extant, altered, not surveyed).<sup>55</sup>

During the Great Depression, much of the construction in the city was under the authority and funding of the New Deal program known as the Works Progress Administration (WPA). In 1935, projects completed by the WPA included the widening of Thirteenth Street from Twenty-ninth to Thirty-third avenues, purchasing and landscaping an addition to Pawnee Park, extending municipal sewer system and water mains, repairing school buildings, and installing concrete curbs and sidewalks in the vicinity of public schools. Five years later, WPA workers were still providing services in Columbus such as planting approximately three thousand trees and shrubs in Pawnee Park (PT01-529), and erecting two Lincoln Highway arches.<sup>56</sup>



FIGURE 11 - COLUMBUS PLANING MILL ADVERTISEMENT, *COLUMBUS DAILY TELEGRAM*, 8 DECEMBER 1925

<sup>55</sup> "Improvements Pass Half Million Mark," *Columbus Telegram* 7 January 1921; "Building Activities Far From Standstill," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 30 December 1921; "30 New Homes are Built in the City During 1929," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 13 January 1930; "To Spend \$850,000 For Improvements Locally This Year," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 7 May 1930; Site Files located at the NeSHPO.

<sup>56</sup> "WPA Okey Sought For 43 Projects in Platte County," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 2 October 1935; "Work Projects of Columbus in List Forwarded by WPA," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 5 September 1935; "Plant Trees in Pawnee Park," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 13 April 1940; "Friedhof Announced Donor of City's Highway Arches," *The Columbus Daily Telegram* 18 September 1940; Pawnee Park, sited north of the Loup River, first used land measuring 83.67 acres. In 1935, the park was increased to 125 acres. Margaret Curry, *The History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Culver City, CA: Murray & Gee, 1950), 552.

A rise in building permits and construction expenses in Columbus signalled the ending of the Depression. While all 1939 construction costs totaled \$74,995, in just the first six months of 1940 construction expenses reached \$58,900.<sup>57</sup> At the end of World War II in 1945, building permits resulted in \$130,535 worth of construction.<sup>58</sup> Thereafter, a steady population increase in Columbus has provided for a continually prosperous construction industry. One of the most significant population increases occurred between 1950 and 1960, when the population jumped from 8,884 to 12,476. Another significant rise occurred between 1970 and 1990, when the population increased from 15,471 to 19,480.<sup>59</sup> This population increase has resulted in planned suburban neighborhoods with semicircular roads and cul-de-sacs located north, east, and west of the Original Town. Furthermore, Twenty-third Street and Thirty-third Avenue have developed into modern commercial thoroughfares. Both streets, which are designated U.S. Highway 30, include strip shopping malls, supermarkets, motels, fast food and chain restaurants, gas stations, and chain retail stores.

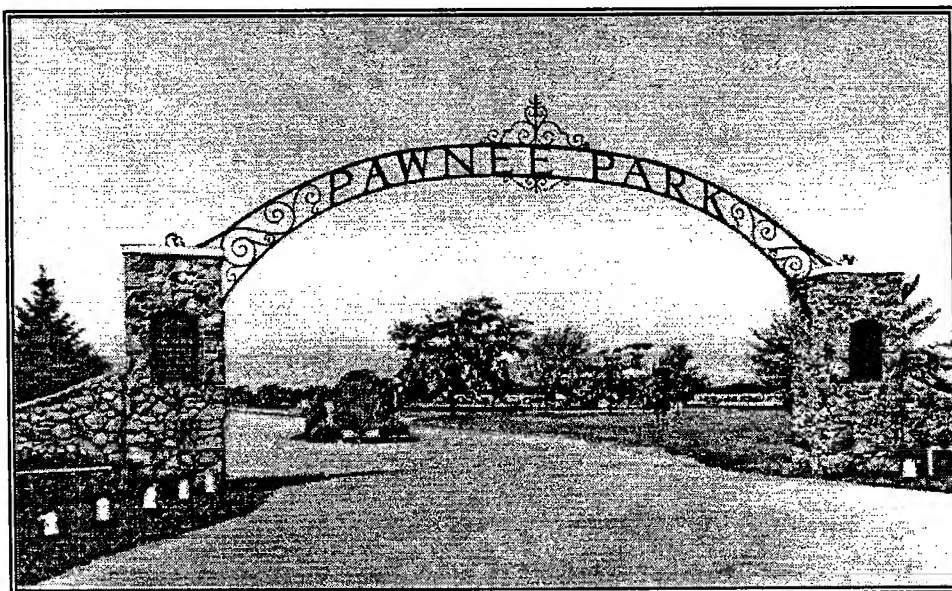


FIGURE 12 - PAWNEE PARK, COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, CA. 1935,  
ZIMMERMAN COLLECTION

<sup>57</sup> "Columbus Has Building Boom," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 29 June 1940.

<sup>58</sup> "Building for 1945 Here Tops 1944," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 11 January 1946.

<sup>59</sup> Nebraska Legislative Council, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book*, 1952 (Lincoln, NE, December 1952), 356; Nebraska Legislative Council, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book*, 1962 (Lincoln, NE, December 1962), 476; Nebraska Legislative Council, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book*, 1972 (Lincoln, NE, December 1972), 640; Clerk of the Legislature, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book*, 1990-1991 (Lincoln, NE: Clerk of the Legislature, 1990), 856.

The development of Columbus did not reach the expectations of its founders, who envisioned the community as the state capital. Nonetheless, its location along the overland trail, the Union Pacific main line, and both the Lincoln and Meridian highways, resulted in national recognition of the community. As a result of its ability to adapt to changing economic conditions, Columbus has experienced continual growth and offers flourishing commercial and industrial centers.

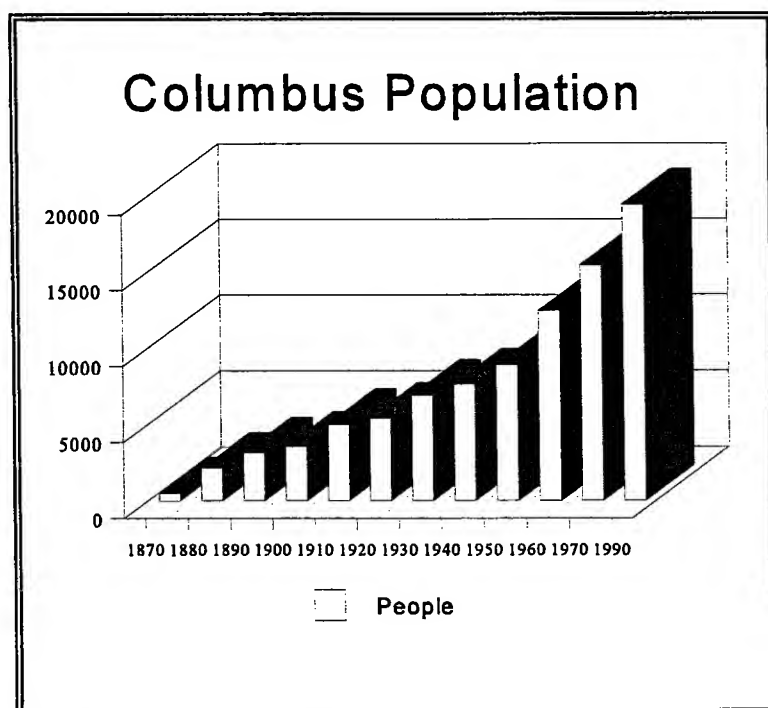


FIGURE 13 - POPULATION STATISTICS OF COLUMBUS

## CORNLEA

Cornlea is located in the north central portion of the county in Granville Township. The name of the community is a hybrid of the words "corn" and "lea," with the latter term defined as "meadow." The title was used in recognition of the high corn yield of the area. Cornlea's development in Platte County coincided with the arrival of the railroad. In the early 1880s, George, H.C., and Peter Bender, John Ternus, Jacob Olk, William Berg, and L.S. Wartin, were some of the first settlers in the vicinity of Cornlea. In 1886, the Fremont, Elkhorn, and Missouri Valley Railroad reached present-day Cornlea. One year later, a post

office began operating in the community. Platted by the Western Town Lot Company, Cornlea was officially organized in 1902.<sup>60</sup>

Based upon a postcard of Cornlea dated 1912, the commercial district was comprised mainly of frame constructed, one-story buildings. False fronts, often ornamented with



FIGURE 14 - CORNLEA, NEBRASKA, MARCH 1912, NSHS

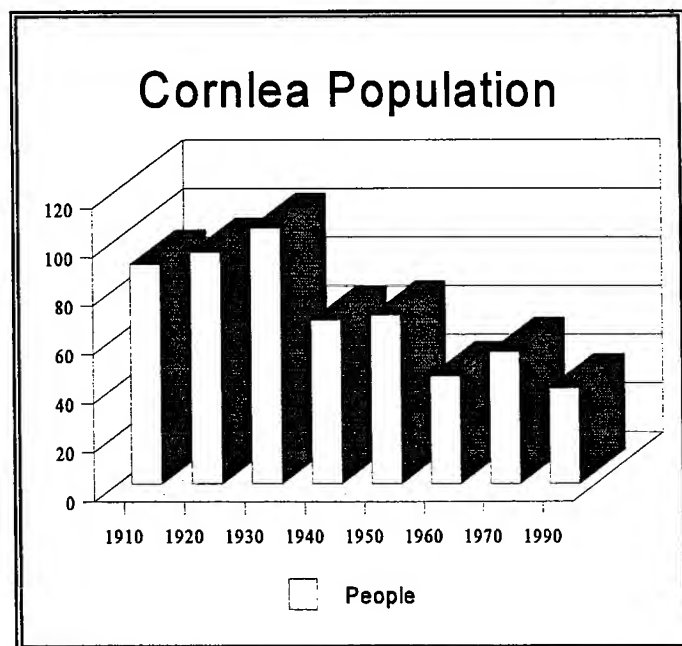


FIGURE 15 - CORNLEA, NEBRASKA POPULATION STATISTICS

elaborate cornices, adorned many of these businesses. Electric and telegraph poles located along the main thoroughfare indicate that Cornlea residents had access to these amenities by the second decade of the twentieth century.

The first census taken in Cornlea in 1910 reported ninety people living in the community. The highest population figure reported in the community was 105 in 1930. During the Depression, many people moved away from Cornlea and in 1940 only sixty-seven people remained. In 1990, the

<sup>60</sup> Margaret Curry, *The History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Culver City, CA: Murray & Gee, 1950), 217.; Jane Graff, coor., *Nebraska Our Towns...Central Northeast* (Dallas, TX: Taylor Publishing Co., 1990), 122.

population of Cornlea was reported at thirty-nine.<sup>61</sup>

Cornlea was originally platted on a grid with seventeen lots located at the southern end reserved exclusively for railroad operations. An early map of the community displays eight blocks divided into lots of fourteen and twenty-eight. Streets exhibited on the map were entitled May, Ann, Elm, June, Rose, First, Second, and Third. Since the lots facing two blocks of Elm and Second streets were divided into smaller parcels than the rest in the community, it seems that these streets were intended to serve as the commercial district. In 1996, streets in Cornlea display neither street signs nor pavement. The community houses two properties which contribute to the survey, including a community hall (PT02-002) and Sacred Heart Cemetery (PT02-003). Cornlea was the only community in the county that did not feature a contributing residential property to the survey.

## CRESTON

Creston is located in the northeast corner of Platte County. The community was named for its hilltop position. A post office operated in Creston as early as 1875. In August of 1886, the Western Town Lot Company platted Creston. Several months later, the Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley railroad tracks reached Creston, and eventually the community served as both a freight and passenger stop. During that same season, the first business, a drug store, began operating. Over the next four years, Creston supported a variety of businesses including a harness shop, shoe maker, livery, blacksmith shop, bank, hardware and implement store, hotel, drayman, grocery store, barber, undertaker, as well as several furniture stores, general stores, and meat markets. In 1890, Creston incorporated.<sup>62</sup>

A photograph of Creston, dated 1890, shows the main thoroughfare lined with frame, false front buildings. These buildings stood one and two-stories tall. Wood planks abutted the buildings and served as temporary sidewalks. Judging from the presence of young seedlings in the photograph and vastness of the landscape in the background, the photograph was

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<sup>61</sup> Addison E. Sheldon, ed., *The Nebraska Blue Book and Historical Register, 1920* (Lincoln, NE, December, 1920), 391; Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau, *The Nebraska Blue Book, 1930* (Lincoln, NE, December, 1930), 334; Nebraska Legislative Council, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book, 1942* (Lincoln, NE, December, 1942), 304; Clerk of the Legislature, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book, 1990-1991* (Lincoln, NE, 1990), 856.

<sup>62</sup> Margaret Curry, *The History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Culver City, CA: Murray & Gee, 1950), 215; *Creston Centennial History, 1890-1990* (Lincoln, NE: Midgard Press, 1990), 28-30; Jane Graff, coor., *Nebraska Our Towns...Central Northeast* (Dallas, TX: Taylor Publishing Co., 1990), 124.

apparently taken shortly after the town's establishment. In 1890, Creston supported a population of 200.<sup>63</sup>



FIGURE 16 - CRESTON, NEBRASKA, 1890, PCHS

At the turn of the century, the 337 residents of Creston were offered six daily trains which included both freight and passenger cars. Shortly thereafter, Creston offered its residents the modern luxuries of a telephone system, under the direction of the Humphrey Telephone

Company, as well as brick walkways along Pine Street. Although Creston flourished in the twentieth century, it experienced a series of fires in the beginning of the first decade. These conflagrations, two of which burned large portions of the downtown, were suspected to have been set by an arsonist. One long term result of the fires was that many of the next generation buildings were built using bricks. By the second decade of the century, Creston exhibited a downtown lined with brick buildings, its own waterworks system, and concrete gutters lined Pine Street.<sup>64</sup>

In 1920, the business district flourished and Creston reached a peak population of 381. The commercial area offered residents nearly thirty different types of business establishments including retail stores, entertainment halls, elevators, restaurants, hotels, telephone company, city hall, post office, doctor's office, and veterinarian clinic. As a result of the increased traffic in Creston, the streets were improved with gravel by the mid-1920s.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Addison E. Sheldon, ed., *The Nebraska Blue Book and Historical Register, 1920* (Lincoln, NE, December, 1920), 391.

<sup>64</sup> *Creston Centennial History, 1890-1990* (Lincoln, NE: Midgard Press, 1990), 46-51; Addison E. Sheldon, ed., *The Nebraska Blue Book and Historical Register, 1920* (Lincoln, NE, December, 1920), 391.

<sup>65</sup> *Creston Centennial History, 1890-1990* (Lincoln, NE: Midgard Press, 1990), 85-86; Addison E. Sheldon, ed., *The Nebraska Blue Book and Historical Register, 1920* (Lincoln, NE, December, 1920), 391.

After World War II, Creston experienced a significant population decline. Between 1940 and 1960, the population fell from 302 to 177. The 1990 census reported 220 people living in Creston.<sup>66</sup>

The initial layout of Creston formed a triangular shape with railroad tracks stretching in a northwest-southeast direction along the west side of the community. The Original Village consisted of eight blocks with Pine Street as the main commercial thoroughfare. Six outlots also initially surrounded the Original Town plat. Several lots lined the east side of the tracks were reserved as Fremont, Elkhorn, and Missouri Valley Railroad station grounds. As Creston grew, some of the outlots were subdivided for development, and more outlots were added.

The commercial district in Creston, located along Pine Street, is situated in the center of the community. Citizens' State Bank (PT03-003) stands as the most prominent commercial building in Creston. Constructed in 1920-1921, this Beaux Arts style building was erected at a cost of fifty thousand dollars.<sup>67</sup> Two other one-story banks (PT03-004; PT03-007), constructed of brick, are also located in Creston. One of the most elaborate places of commerce on Pine Street is a one-story brick building (PT03-003), which stands two storefronts wide and exhibits semicircular pediments, pilasters, and finials. In relation to the emergence of the automobile, a twentieth century commercial vernacular form garage (PT03-002) with a stepped roof and ornate pilasters is located just off the main thoroughfare on Third Street. A gas station (PT03-019), at the southeast corner of Third and Pine streets, displays concrete block construction, a combination hipped/gable roof, and ornamental brackets.

Creston also exhibits a variety of architecturally significant homes including four Bungalows or Bungalow influenced buildings (PT03-017, PT03-021, PT03-027; PT03-029). These buildings range from one and one-half to two stories and display features such as columns, brackets, dormers, and wrap porches. Vernacular forms of residential architecture in Creston include a gable ell (PT03-022), cross gable (PT03-023), side gable (PT03-025), gable T (PT03-026), and two-story cube (PT03-028).

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<sup>66</sup> Nebraska Legislative Council, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book*, 1942 (Lincoln, NE, December, 1942), 304; Nebraska Legislative Council, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book*, 1962 (Lincoln, NE, 1962), 476; Clerk of the Legislature, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book*, 1990-1991 (Lincoln, NE, 1990), 856.

<sup>67</sup> "Citizens' State Bank of Creston Will Open New \$50,000 Building, *The Columbus Telegram* 4 February 1921.



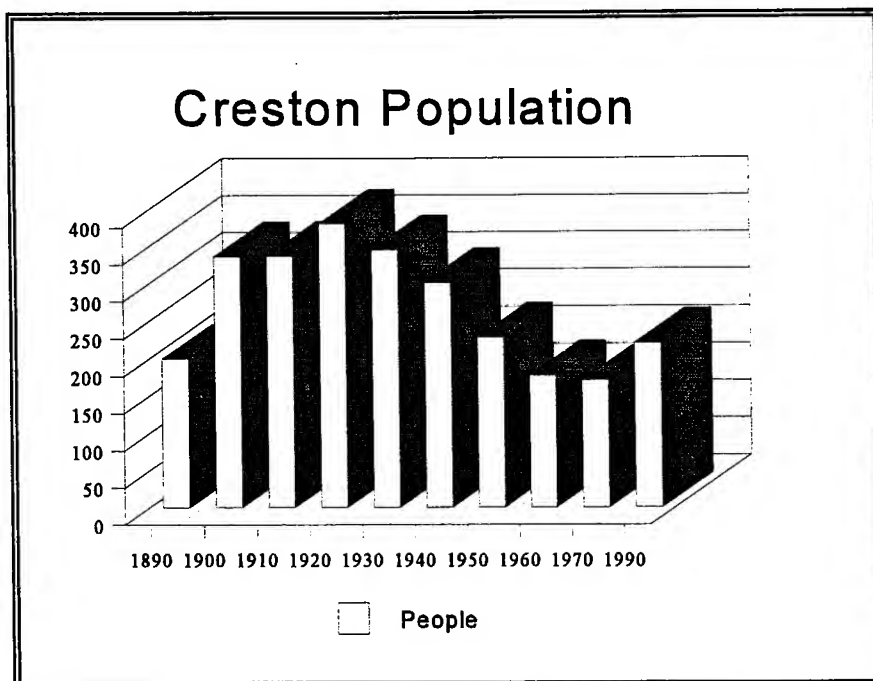


FIGURE 17 - CRESTON, NEBRASKA POPULATION STATISTICS

## DUNCAN

Duncan is in the south central part of the county. It is the only community in the county south of the Loup River. In 1869, the first post office to open in the vicinity of present-day Duncan was named Cherry Hill. Two years later, the site of Cherry Hill was platted by the railroad and renamed Jackson. In 1880, the community's name was finally changed to Duncan, after a Union Pacific conductor.<sup>68</sup>

In 1913 Duncan was incorporated. The first Duncan census, taken in 1920, which totaled 182 people, mainly Polish and Swiss immigrants. The Original Town was platted in approximately a seven-block area. Early additions in Duncan included Borowiak, Church, and Kennedy. Union Pacific Railroad tracks ran diagonally through the southern end of Duncan and divided the Kennedy Outlot from the rest of the community. The residential neighborhoods initially developed north and west of the commercial district and later extended south across the tracks. Vernacular forms, such as frame and concrete block one-

<sup>68</sup> Elton A. Perkey, "Perkey's Names of Nebraska Locations," *Nebraska History* 59 (Fall 1978): 453-454; Jane Graff, coord., *Nebraska Our Towns...Central Northeast* (Dallas, TX: Taylor Publishing Co., 1990), 126.



FIGURE 18 - DUNCAN, NEBRASKA, MAIN STREET LOOKING NORTHWEST, 1914, ZIMMERMAN COLLECTION

story cubes (PT04-014; PT04-009), front gables (PT04-023), side gables and clipped side gables (PT04-013), comprise the majority of the residential buildings in Duncan. Many of these buildings are modest in size with little ornamentation. The only houses in the community to exhibit an architectural style were three Bungalows (PT04-011; PT04-012;

PT04-021). Features on these buildings include brackets, collar beams, cutaway porches, and columns. One of the most significant community-associated complexes in Duncan is the 1939 St. Stanislaus Church (PT04-003) and Rectory (PT04-004), which was organized in 1876.<sup>69</sup> Another important and intact building in Duncan is the frame, gambrel roof community hall (PT04-007).

Shortly after the turn of the century, Duncan housed several commercial buildings constructed of concrete block. An early photograph of the commercial district, dated 1914, exhibits the Columbus State Bank adjacent to two other businesses. Although these buildings are still extant, they have been altered to the point where they do not contribute to the survey. West of the concrete businesses are several front gable, frame buildings. Judging from their signage, it appears these buildings were also used for commerce. These frame buildings were later replaced by the two-story, brick A. M. Duster Building (PT04-001), which displays twentieth century commercial vernacular form, and a concrete block service garage (PT04-020). Based upon the photograph, Eighth Street was not paved in 1914 and still offered customers several hitching posts.

<sup>69</sup> Addison E. Sheldon, ed., *The Nebraska Blue Book and Historical Register, 1920* (Lincoln, NE, December, 1920), 392; Margaret Curry, *The History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Culver City, CA: Murray & Gee, 1950), 217.

Duncan, located along tracks of the Union Pacific, afforded nearby residents easy access to larger markets. Furthermore, it was also located on the path of the first transcontinental automobile route known as the Lincoln Highway (aka Highway 30). As early as 1914, residents were supportive of having the highway routed through their community, indicated by the fact that during that year the young women of the community held a coffee social and raised fifteen dollars to support the Lincoln Highway Association. A decade later, twenty Duncan business people and nearby farmers, who realized the importance of road conditions of the Lincoln Highway, formed a delegation which protested to county officials about the condition of the road west of their community.<sup>70</sup>

Two Lincoln Highway markers, erected in 1928, are extant in the community.<sup>71</sup> One of the markers (PT04-025) is located in its original setting on the southeast corner of Main Avenue and North Boulevard. The other marker (PT04-026), which sits in the park at the northeast corner of Main Avenue and Ninth Street, has been moved from its original unknown home. Prior to the rerouting of the highway, the original route crossed the tracks approximately one mile east of Duncan. It then headed in a northwest direction along the north side of the tracks. It followed North Boulevard past the marker and then headed west on Sixth Street. Even though part of this path is covered with grass, the route is very apparent, delineated by two rows of mature hackberry trees which create a seventeen foot wide corridor for approximately one-quarter mile, directly west of the marker. This route was located parallel to and approximately half a block south of the commercial district of Duncan.

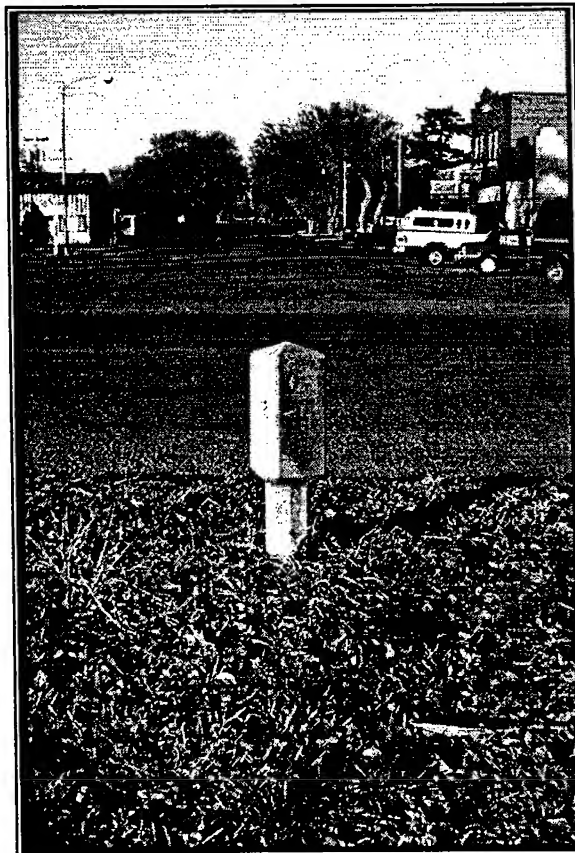


FIGURE 19 - DUNCAN, NEBRASKA, LINCOLN HIGHWAY MARKER, LOOKING WEST, 1995, NSHS

<sup>70</sup> "The Young Ladies of Duncan...." *Columbus Telegram* 8 May 1914; "Duncan Farmers and Business Men Urge Action on Highway," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 11 February 1925.

<sup>71</sup> Carol Ahlgren and David Anthone, "The Lincoln Highway in Nebraska: The Pioneer Trail of the Automobile," *Nebraska History* 73 (Winter 1992): 178.

Three extant one-story garages reside on the north side of the tracks. One is clad with tin (PT04-016) and two display concrete block construction (PT04-017; PT04-020). These

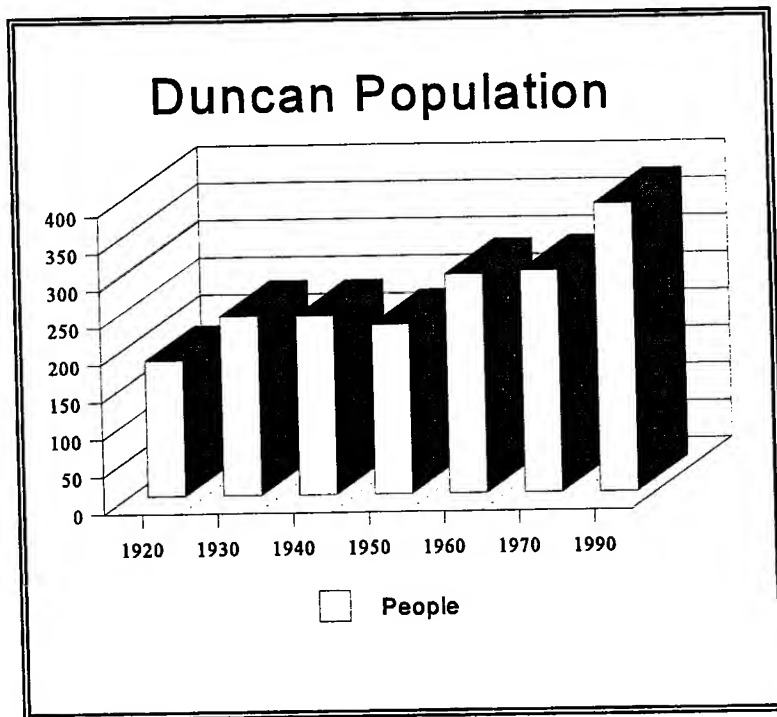


FIGURE 20 - DUNCAN, NEBRASKA POPULATION STATISTICS

buildings are located within a two-block radius along Main Avenue and Eighth Street. After the Lincoln Highway was rerouted to bypass many Union Pacific Railroad crossings in the late 1920s or early 1930s, the road ran south of the tracks and bypassed downtown Duncan. After the realignment, a gas station was erected along the south side of Lincoln Boulevard (aka U.S. Highway 30). It is a one-story, concrete building (PT04-024) with a streamlined metal awning.

With the exception of 1950, when it dropped thirteen people from the prior decade every Duncan census has shown a population increase. Several of the largest increases include: a rise from 182 in 1920 to 241 in 1930; a jump between 1950 and 1960 from 228 to 294; and a climb between 1970 and 1990 from 298 to 387.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Addison E. Sheldon, ed., *The Nebraska Blue Book and Historical Register, 1920* (Lincoln, NE, December, 1920), 392; Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau, *The Nebraska Blue Book, 1930* (Lincoln, NE, December, 1930), 335; Nebraska Legislative Council, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book, 1952* (Lincoln, NE, December, 1952), 356; Nebraska Legislative Council, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book, 1962* (Lincoln, NE, 1962), 477; Nebraska Legislative Council, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book, 1972* (Lincoln, NE, 1972), 641; Clerk of the Legislature, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book, 1990-1991* (Lincoln, NE, 1990), 856.

## HUMPHREY

Humphrey is located in the north central region of the county. Both the Union Pacific tracks and U.S. Highway 81 (aka Meridian Highway) run in a north-south direction east of Humphrey. Humphrey has been the second largest community in the county since its inception.

In 1871, a post office began operating in the area of present-day Humphrey. Either the postmaster or an early homesteader named the settlement after their hometown in the state of New York. In 1880, Humphrey was platted by a surveyor for the Omaha, Niobrara, and Black Hills Company and it eventually served as a station on the Fremont, Elkhorn, and Missouri Valley Railroad. German immigrants were the first settlers in the vicinity of Humphrey. Early businesses included a lumber yard, hotel, drug store, grain and hop business, hardware store, saloon, real estate business, furniture store, bank, and harness shop. By 1890, Humphrey supported a population of 691.<sup>73</sup>



FIGURE 21 - HUMPHREY, NEBRASKA, MAIN STREET  
LOOKING WEST, CA. 1914, NSHS

A photograph of Humphrey, dated circa 1914, shows Main Street between Third and Fourth streets. At the time of this photograph, several false front buildings were still located in the district. The majority of the buildings were brick and stood between one and two-stories tall. A variety of Italianate style commercial buildings were located on the south side of the street and displayed ornate metal cornices. A number of buildings in the 1914 photograph (PT05-044; PT05-045; PT05-046; PT05-061;) are extant in 1996. Concrete sidewalks and electrical

<sup>73</sup> Elton A. Perkey, "Perkey's Names of Nebraska Locations," *Nebraska History* 59 (Fall 1978): 454; Margaret Curry, *The History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Culver City, CA: Murray & Gee, 1950), 216-217; Addison E. Sheldon, ed., *The Nebraska Blue Book and Historical Register, 1920* (Lincoln, NE, December, 1920), 395.

poles on the south side of the street serviced Humphrey's downtown by the early twentieth century. This district accommodated the local farmers as well as the city's population, which peaked at 868 in 1910.<sup>74</sup>

The community was platted with additions entitled Ederson's, Robinson's, Ottis, Lubischer's First, Lockner's, and Ripp's. The blocks, divided into eight and twelve lots, were designated with numbers. Humphrey's commercial district was established along Main Street. While the north-south streets exhibited numbers, the east-west streets displayed names of trees and numbered avenues. Union Pacific Railroad tracks and Tracy Creek ran along the east side

of the community. A four block square of land in the south central part of the community was designated to house a Franciscan monastery.



FIGURE 22 - DOWNTOWN HUMPHREY, 1995, NSHS

Humphrey's extant buildings display some of the most architecturally significant styles in the county. It has an intact main street commercial district which dates primarily from the turn of the century located between Third and Fifth streets. The survey de-

termined that area may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Prominent architectural styles found in this potential district include the Romanesque Revival style (PT05-043; PT05-046), Italianate style (PT05-045); Sullivanesque influence (PT05-044) and twentieth century commercial vernacular (PT05-049; PT05-061; and PT05-069). These buildings stand between one and two-stories tall with brick construction. Ornamentation includes corbeling, arched lintels, concrete sills, transoms, metal awnings, string courses, and a corner entryway.

<sup>74</sup> Addison E. Sheldon, ed., *The Nebraska Blue Book and Historical Register*, 1920 (Lincoln, NE, December, 1920), 395.

Some of the oldest properties inventoried in the community include three false front buildings, the city hall, and the St. Francis Catholic Church complex. False fronts were used in first generation buildings of a town to give the appearance of taller proportions. Humphrey still houses several of these buildings including two commercial buildings (PT05-006; PT05-027) and a community hall (PT05-020). Another early building in the community is the city hall (PT05-022). Constructed in 1902, this two-story, brick building displays Romanesque Revival influence. Ornamental features include round arched windows, segmental and lancet arched doorways, a semicircular and triangular pediment, and pilasters. St. Francis Catholic Church (PT05-001), and its associated school (PT05-004) and convents (PT05-002; PT05-003) also stand

as early landmarks of Humphrey's history. The complex displays a variety of architectural styles with the 1893-1894 church designed in Gothic Revival, the circa 1905 St. Francis School in Georgian Revival, and the circa 1923-1924 St. Francis Convent (PT05-003), in Spanish Revival.

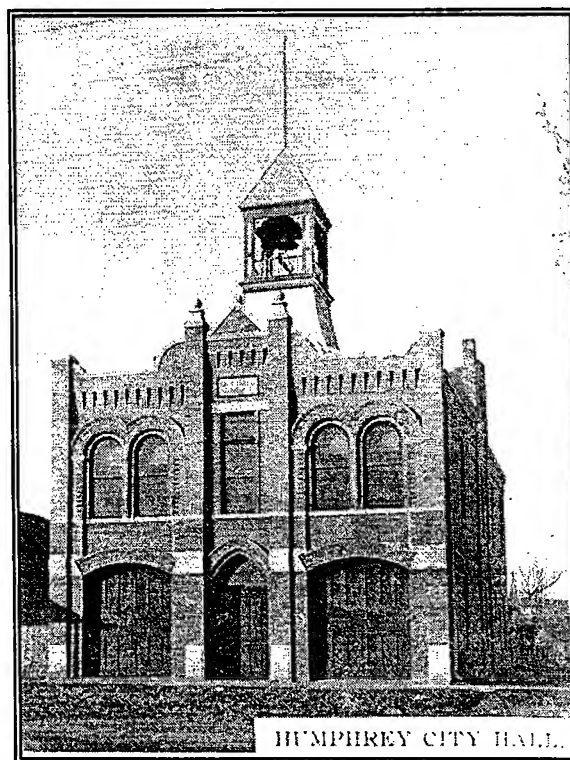


FIGURE 23 - HUMPHREY CITY HALL (PT05-022), CIRCA 1905, NSHS

Most of the residential buildings in Humphrey are vernacular in form. Common forms found include front gable (PT05-053; PT05-060), gable ell (PT05-019; PT05-052; PT05-054), side clipped gable and side gable (PT05-030; PT05-076), one-story cubes (PT05-033; PT05-072; PT05-078), two-story cube (PT05-071), and cross gable (PT05-042) with Queen Anne influence such as bargeboard and shaped shingles. Queen Anne and Bungalow styles make up a majority of the stylistic houses in Humphrey. Five Bungalows (PT05-036; PT05-056; PT05-059; PT05-073; PT05-077), which display a variety of features such as purlins, brackets, pilasters, and gable and shed dormers, were surveyed in the community. Five Queen Anne style houses (PT05-010; PT05-029; PT05-041; PT05-051; PT05-075) were also inventoried. Ornamental features on these houses include bargeboard, shaped shingles, multi-gable roofs, wrap porches, three sided bays, and even a bell-shaped tower. The most unique residential building identified in Humphrey was the William Eimers House (PT05-

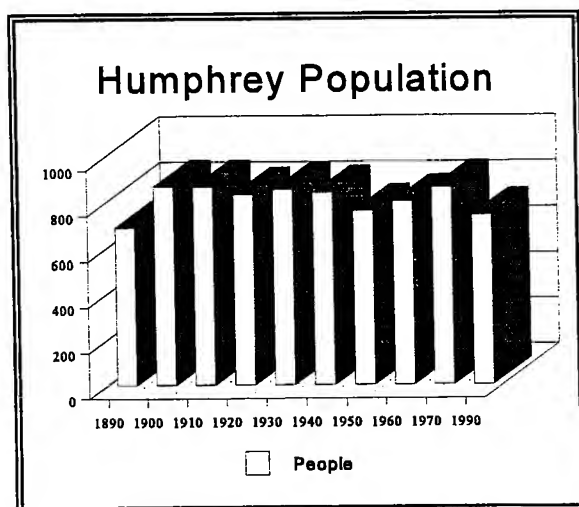


FIGURE 24 - HUMPHREY, NEBRASKA  
POPULATION STATISTICS

026). This building, which was constructed shortly after the founding of Humphrey, exhibits features of the Second Empire Revival style.

The population of Humphrey has remained relatively stable since its organization. The peak population of Humphrey was reported to be 869 at the turn of the century. This figure remained within a thirty-four person range until 1950 when it dropped to 761. Nonetheless, by 1970 the population rebounded back up to 862. In 1990, Humphrey encompassed 741 people.<sup>75</sup>

## LINDSAY

Lindsay, which grew on the edge of a small valley, is located in the northwest corner of the county. As a result of the 1862 Homestead Act, settlers occupied land along Shell Creek, which was in the vicinity of current-day Lindsay. In 1874, a post office operated in the area. Early in the next decade, a group of Irish settlers from Lindsay, Ontario, Canada entered the area, and named the community after their hometown.<sup>76</sup>

By 1887 railroad tracks for the Albion Line operated to Lindsay. The Albion Line, a branch line of the Fremont, Elkhorn, and Missouri Valley Railroad, extended to Lindsay from Scribner. This line also connected the stations of Creston, Humphrey, and Cornlea. The Western Town Lot Company platted Lindsay in 1886 and by that spring the community was incorporated. One year later, Lindsay housed twenty new buildings. As early as 1893, the business district offered a variety of businesses, including general stores, hardware stores,

<sup>75</sup> Addison E. Sheldon, ed., *The Nebraska Blue Book and Historical Register*, 1920 (Lincoln, NE, December, 1920), 395; Nebraska Legislative Council, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book*, 1952 (Lincoln, NE, December, 1952), 358; Nebraska Legislative Council, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book*, 1972 (Lincoln, NE, 1972), 642; Clerk of the Legislature, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book*, 1990-1991 (Lincoln, NE, 1990), 856.

<sup>76</sup> Elton A. Perkey, "Perkey's Names of Nebraska Locations," *Nebraska History* 59 (Fall 1978): 454; Lindsay Centennial Book Committee, *The "First" One Hundred Years, 1888-1988* (Norfolk, NE: Marathon Press Incorporated, 1987), 2.



implement businesses, a livery barn, a harness shop, a furniture store, a bank, a blacksmith shop, a post office, a carpenter shop, a hotel, a saloon, a drug store, and a meat market.<sup>77</sup>

Shortly after the turn of the century, with a population of 316, Lindsay accommodated an electric light plant and a waterworks system. By the second decade, businesses located in Lindsay included nearly forty different types of commercial establishments including retail stores, saloons, agriculture related businesses, restaurants, physicians, banks, a newspaper, an electric light company a waterworks company, a telephone company, and a post office.<sup>78</sup>

The plat map of Lindsay exhibited the heart of the community in the Original Village, as well as two additions. This platted area was divided into approximately nine blocks with the main commercial strip running along Pine Street between Second and Front streets, with the numbered streets running parallel to the railroad tracks. Land located to the south of the railroad tracks were reserved for warehouse lots. The north-south streets in Lindsay were given tree names, such as Elm, Oak, Ash, Pine Walnut, and Maple. The east-west streets were numbered as they escalate from south to north from the tracks. No residential development has taken place south of the railroad tracks, though sections had been platted.

Commercial buildings surveyed in Lindsay include a one-story, brick gas station (PT06-025), a one-story brick commercial building (PT06-011) with segmental arched lintels and doorway, and the Lindsay State Bank (PT06-014) designed in Neo-Classical Revival style with ornamental pilasters, cornice, and dentils. The physical fabric of Lindsay's residential neighborhoods consists mainly of vernacular forms such as side gable (PT06-021), front gable (PT06-005; PT06-023), gable T (PT06-024), two-story cube (PT06-003), and a one-story cube (PT06-009). In some cases, these vernacular forms are ornamented with high style architectural features. For example, a gable T house (PT06-004), located at the northwest corner of Third and Ash streets, displays Queen Anne details such as shaped shingles, turned posts, and turned balusters. The most architecturally dramatic building in Lindsay is the 1905-1906 Holy Family Catholic School (PT06-007) designed in Georgian Revival style. It exhibits brick construction with a stone foundation, ornamental hoods and sills, an arched doorway, and hipped dormers.

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<sup>77</sup> In 1903, the Chicago and Northwestern took over the operations of the Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley Railroad. Lindsay Centennial Book Committee, *The "First" One Hundred Years, 1888-1988* (Norfolk, NE: Marathon Press Incorporated, 1987), 2-4.

<sup>78</sup> Addison E. Sheldon, ed., *The Nebraska Blue Book and Historical Register, 1920* (Lincoln, NE, December, 1920), 395; Lindsay Centennial Book Committee, *The "First" One Hundred Years, 1888-1988* (Norfolk, NE: Marathon Press Incorporated, 1987), 3-5.

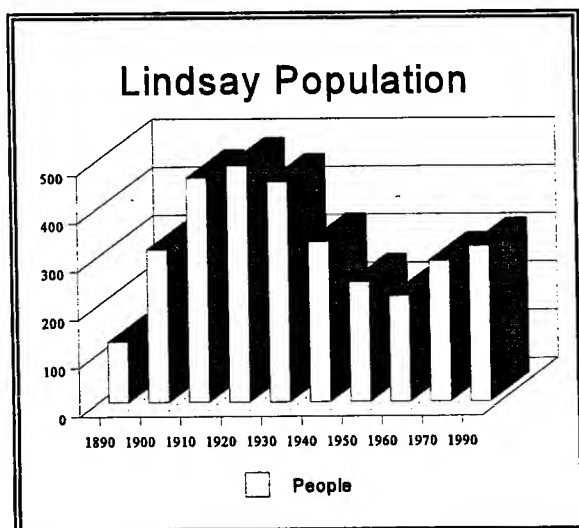


FIGURE 25 - LINDSAY, NEBRASKA  
POPULATION STATISTICS

The highest populations in Lindsay occurred between 1910 and 1930 when statistics reported 490 people in 1920. Thereafter, the population decreased and by 1960 it was at a low of 218. It is interesting to note that this trend changed and over the next three decades the population grew to 321 by 1990. Recent population increases in Lindsay are most likely a result of the nearby operations of the Lindsay Manufacturing Company, which is an international supplier of irrigation machinery.<sup>79</sup>

## MONROE

Monroe, located less than a mile north of the Loup River, is located on the southwestern edge of the county. The founders of Monroe, Charles H. Whaley and Leander Gerrard, named the community after the fifth president of the United States. Though Monroe was settled in 1857 with a post office servicing the area one year later, it was not officially platted until 1889. Monroe was initially the county seat of Monroe County, but when Monroe and Platte counties consolidated and Monroe County no longer existed, the community lost its title. In 1899, Monroe was incorporated.<sup>80</sup>

Based upon a postcard of Monroe dated 1908, the commercial district displayed unpaved streets, wood plank sidewalks, and electric poles. The commercial hub consisted of sparsely placed one and two-story, false front commercial buildings exhibiting frame construction.

<sup>79</sup> Addison E. Sheldon, ed., *The Nebraska Blue Book and Historical Register, 1920* (Lincoln, NE, December, 1920), 395; Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau, *The Nebraska Blue Book, 1930* (Lincoln, NE, December, 1930), 337; Nebraska Legislative Council, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book, 1962* (Lincoln, NE, 1962), 479; Clerk of the Legislature, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book, 1990-1991* (Lincoln, NE, 1990), 856; Jane Graff, coor., *Nebraska Our Towns...Central Northeast* (Dallas, TX: Taylor Publishing Co., 1990), 129.

<sup>80</sup> Elton A. Perkey, "Perkey's Names of Nebraska Locations," *Nebraska History* 59 (Fall 1978): 454; Margaret Curry, *The History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Culver City, CA: Murray & Gee, 1950), 218; Jane Graff, coor., *Nebraska Our Towns...Central Northeast* (Dallas, TX: Taylor Publishing Co., 1990), 132.

The pictured commercial district accommodated a population of 214 people reported in 1900 and 282 in 1910.<sup>81</sup>

The Original Village of Monroe, which consisted of six blocks, was platted between Webster Street and Gleason Street to the east and west and Railroad Avenue and the Columbus and Genoa Road (aka State Highway 22) to the south and north. Located directly east of this section was East Addition. Gerrard Avenue, which featured the commercial

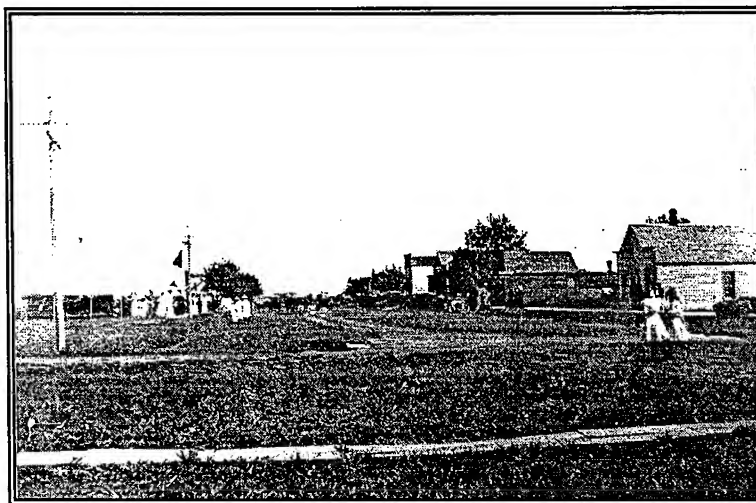


FIGURE 26 - MONROE, NEBRASKA, SEPTEMBER 1908, NSHS

district and ran parallel to the Union Pacific Railroad tracks, bisected the center of both the East Addition and the Original Village. Other additions located to the north of the Columbus and Genoa Road included Terry, Hick, Osborn, and Scram. Named after a prominent family in the history of Monroe, Gerrard's Addition was platted south of the railroad tracks.

Nine of the thirteen properties surveyed in Monroe face Gerrard Avenue, including an auditorium, a church, four commercial buildings, and three residences. Monroe's auditorium (PT07-016), constructed in 1940, was funded by a municipal bond and erected by WPA workers. This building displays concrete block constructions with stucco walls.<sup>82</sup> The Bank of Monroe (PT07-010) stands as a fine example of Neo-Classical Revival style architecture. Nevertheless, since its rear windows have been bricked-in, it is classified as only contributing to the survey. Three brick commercial buildings (PT07-017; PT07-018; PT07-019), stand one-story tall and exhibit twentieth century commercial vernacular form. The residential buildings along Gerrard Avenue include two one-story cubes (PT07-013; PT07-021) and a one and one-half story gable roof house (PT07-020) with fishscale ornamentation.

Other prominent buildings in Monroe, which boasted a population of 309 in 1990, include a house and a school. The C. W. Hollinghead House (PT07-007), located at the southwest

<sup>81</sup> Addison E. Sheldon, ed., *The Nebraska Blue Book and Historical Register, 1920* (Lincoln, NE, December, 1920), 396.

<sup>82</sup> "Monroe to Dedicate New Auditorium," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 3 December 1940.

corner of the Columbus-Genoa Road and Robley Street, is a two-story Queen Anne style building. District #76 Public School (PT07-001), constructed between 1919 and 1920 at a cost of \$26,500, exhibits Neo- Classical Revival style architecture. It was built on the north end of the community at the northwest corner of Osborn Avenue and Webster Street.<sup>83</sup>

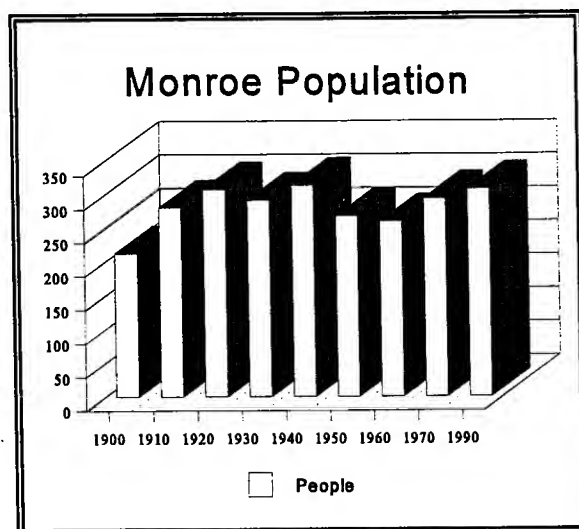


FIGURE 27 - MONROE, NEBRASKA  
POPULATION STATISTICS

## PLATTE CENTER

Platte Center is located in the central portion of the county, along Union Pacific tracks and immediately west of U.S. Highway 81 (aka Meridian Highway). The name of the community reflected its central location, as well as its proximity to the Platte River. In 1879, a post office was established in the area. One year later, the Omaha, Niobrara, and Black Hills Railroad Company platted the community consisting of forty-seven people. Platte Center underwent incorporation in 1885. Early businesses included a general store, doctor's office, blacksmith, hardware store, and bank. Approximately one decade later, the Platte Center directory of 1896-1897 listed a general store, clothing store, hotel, opera house, drug store, real estate and loan business, newspaper, livery, elevator, and lumber company. The Platte Center Waterworks organized in 1901 and the first volunteer fire department

<sup>83</sup> Clerk of the Legislature, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book, 1990-1991* (Lincoln, NE, 1990), 856; "Monroe Dedicates New Standard School with Two-Day Program," *The Columbus Telegram* 16 April 1920.

began operating in 1908. Five years later, an electrical system was established in Platte Center.<sup>84</sup>

By the second decade of the century, Platte Center housed a variety of one and two-story commercial buildings ranging from frame to brick construction. A photograph dated circa 1913 depicts the commercial district's architectural trends including false fronts, Italianate, Romanesque, and twentieth century commercial vernacular styles and forms. Identifiable extant buildings in this photograph include the 1912 M.D. Payne Building (PT09-023) at the northwest corner of Fourth and D streets and the 1901 Platte Center Bank (PT09-024) at the northeast corner of Fourth and D streets. Based upon evidence in the photograph,

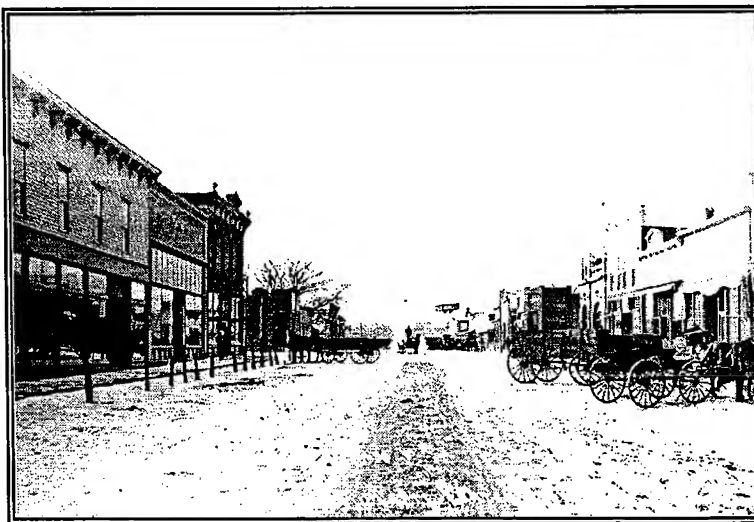


FIGURE 28 - PLATTE CENTER, NEBRASKA, FOURTH STREET  
LOOKING WEST, CA. 1913, NSHS

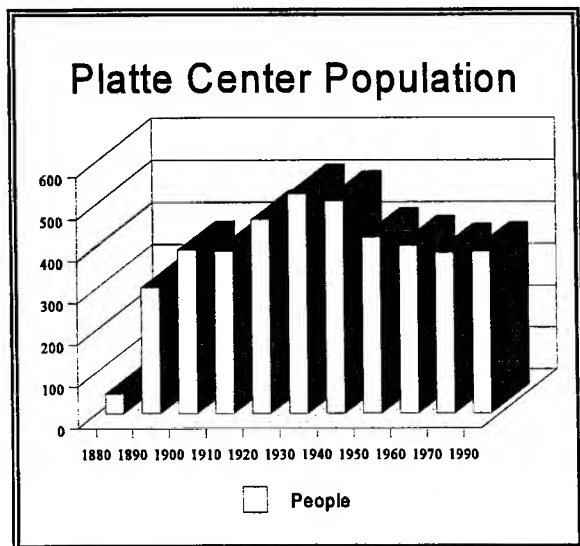
Fourth Street was not paved and offered visitors a number of hitching posts. It is evident by the densely placed buildings in the two block area, as well as the ornamentation on the buildings, that Platte Center had a strong trade economy. Furthermore, as a result of the power lines running along the north-south cross streets, it is apparent that residents of the commercial district possibly had access to electricity and/or telephone.

The layout of Platte Center is typical of many communities developed adjacent to railroad tracks. While the Original Village was platted on the east side of the tracks, the First Addition was located on the west side. Grove and Roberts were also platted as early additions to the west and east respectively. The north-south streets were labeled with letters and east-west with numbers. The commercial district of Platte Center resided on the east side of the tracks. Since the community was set in a small valley, several residences as well

<sup>84</sup> Elton A. Perkey, "Perkey's Names of Nebraska Locations," *Nebraska History* 59 (Fall 1978): 455; Addison E. Sheldon, ed., *The Nebraska Blue Book and Historical Register, 1920* (Lincoln, NE, December 1920), 398; Margaret Curry, *The History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Culver City, CA: Murray & Gee, 1950), 215-216; Jane Graff, coor., *Nebraska Our Towns...Central Northeast* (Dallas, TX: Taylor Publishing Co., 1990), 133.

as the 1924 Spanish Revival style St. Joseph Catholic Church, rested on an incline in the northeast corner. Three of the oldest houses in the community were built just west of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks along Fourth Street, including a two-story cube (PT09-010), a one-story, hipped roof house with Italianate style influence (PT09-011), and a one-story, hipped roof house (PT09-031). Other vernacular forms include a side gable (PT09-027), side clipped gable (PT09-036), and a front gable (PT09-030). Two Bungalows (PT09-033; PT09-034) were also surveyed in the community. Constructed as a result of Platte County's

proximity to the Meridian Highway, two garages (PT09-032; PT09-037) were identified in the survey. Both garages are one-story concrete block buildings with stepped roofs.



The highest population of Platte Center was reported in 1930 at 525, an increase of sixty-one people over the previous decade. By 1950, the population fell to 422. In 1990, 387 people resided in Platte Center.<sup>85</sup>

FIGURE 29 - PLATTE CENTER, NEBRASKA  
POPULATION STATISTICS

## TARNOV

Tarnov is located in the central part of the county. Originally known as Burrows, the community was platted by the Union Land Company in 1889. Two years later, immigrant settlers renamed the community after their homeland in Poland. In 1891, a post office opened for business. By 1905, Tarnov underwent the process of incorporation and five years

<sup>85</sup> Addison E. Sheldon, ed., *The Nebraska Blue Book and Historical Register, 1920* (Lincoln, NE, December, 1920), 398; Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau, *The Nebraska Blue Book, 1930* (Lincoln, NE, December, 1930), 338; Nebraska Legislative Council, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book, 1952* (Lincoln, NE, December, 1952), 359; Clerk of the Legislature, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book, 1990-1991* (Lincoln, NE, 1990), 856.

later 121 people lived in the community. In 1920, Tarnov reached its highest population of 128.<sup>86</sup>

The map of Tarnov was platted with an Original Village, which consisted of six blocks. Located south of the Original Village is Gerrard's First and Second subdivisions. Union Pacific tracks ran along the eastern edge of the community. The north-south streets were numbered incrementally increasing as they headed west from the rails. The east-west street exhibited names of trees such as Pine, Cedar, Maple, and Walnut.

Tarnov sits in a valley, with the commercial district located at the base. In 1990, Tarnov housed the second smallest community population in the county, with only sixty-one residents, half the number reported in the 1910 census.<sup>87</sup>

The most prominent property, located on the crest of a hill northwest of the community, is the St. Michael's Catholic Church complex. The complex consists of a 1901 church (PT12-001), 1911 school (PT12-002), rectory (PT12-003), 1880 cemetery (PT12-005), 1926-1927 grotto (PT12-004), and 1911 chicken house (PT12-006). The Gothic Revival style church and school display lancet windows and door-ways, stone sills and

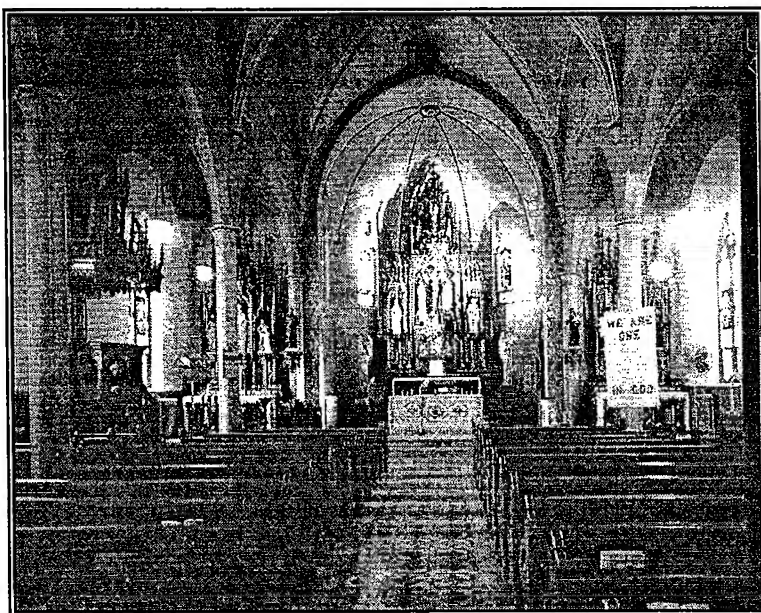


FIGURE 30 - ST. MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH (PT12-001) INTERIOR, TARNOV, NEBRASKA, 1980, NSHS

foundation, arched brickwork along the gable ends, and dentils. The 1911 rectory exhibits Italianate style influence with lancet windows and overhanging eaves. The construction of the grotto on the grounds of St. Michael's, which is named Our Lady of Lourdes, was

<sup>86</sup> Elton A. Perkey, "Perkey's Names of Nebraska Locations," *Nebraska History* 59 (Fall 1978): 453-455; Margaret Curry, *The History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Culver City, CA: Murray & Gee, 1950), 217-218; Addison E. Sheldon, ed., *The Nebraska Blue Book and Historical Register, 1920* (Lincoln, NE, December, 1920), 401.

<sup>87</sup> Clerk of the Legislature, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book, 1990-1991* (Lincoln, NE, 1990), 856.

conceived by a World War I veteran as a war memorial for the people of Tarnov.<sup>88</sup> The entire property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990.

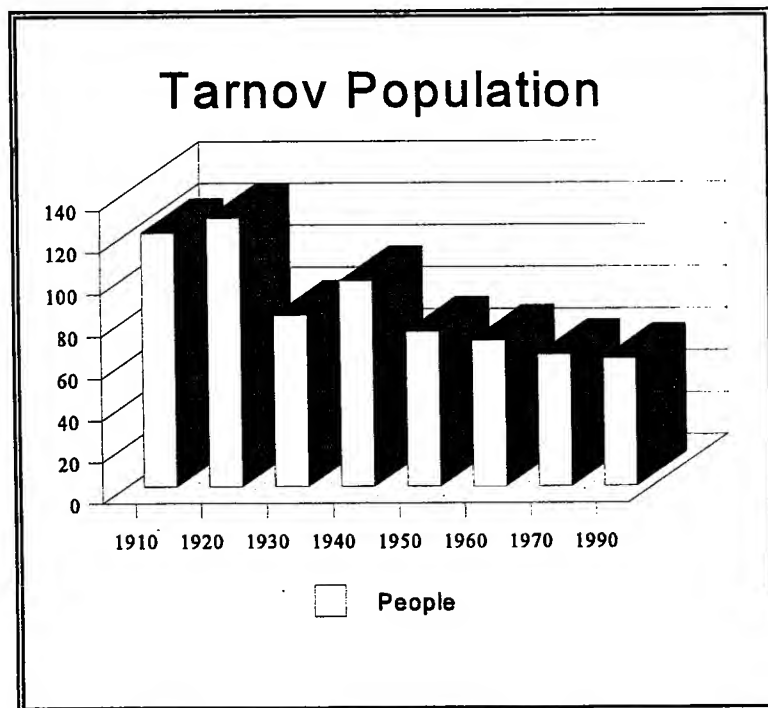


FIGURE 3 I - TARNOV, NEBRASKA POPULATION STATISTICS

<sup>88</sup> Jane Graff, coor., *Nebraska Our Towns...Central Northeast* (Dallas, TX: Taylor Publishing Co., 1990), 135.



### III

## COLUMBUS COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

### INTRODUCTION

Columbus, located in southeastern Platte County, has served as a commercial center since its inception. Positioned near the Platte River, Columbus benefitted from the early westward migration, and railroad activity. Since Platte County is located in rich agricultural country, many farmers utilized Columbus as a commercial market and transportation center. Presently, the community houses 19,480 people and serves as a trade center for at least a twenty-five-mile radius.<sup>89</sup> The hub of Columbus' downtown spans approximately ten and one-half blocks, and the historic portion is at the core of the downtown area. As a component to the NeHBS of Platte County, MVAC drafted a National Register of Historic Places Nomination for the proposed Columbus Commercial Historic District. This draft nomination includes a boundary map of the district, a list of contributing and non-contributing buildings which are located in the district, a property owners list, historical overview, architectural description, statement of significance, bibliography, verbal boundary description, U.S.G.S. map, and black and white photographs. All of these products meet the standards specified by the National Park Service.<sup>90</sup>

Resources, (i.e. newspaper articles, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, and historical accounts of Columbus' development) regarding the construction dates and historic names for buildings located in the Columbus Commercial Historic District are kept in the NeSHPO site files. These files, which are identified by survey numbers, are housed at the Nebraska State Historical Society, in Lincoln, Nebraska. If a building does not have a site number or other notation, it most likely is not extant or noncontributing to the NeHBS survey.

The proposed Columbus Commercial Historic District is a grouping of one hundred twenty-seven properties within a ten and one-half block area located approximately in the center of

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<sup>89</sup> Clerk of the Legislature, comp., *Nebraska Blue Book, 1990-1991* (Lincoln, NE, 1990), 857.

<sup>90</sup> For more information about the National Register of Historic Places, please see Introduction.  
page 2.

the city of Columbus. It represents what has been historically, and is currently, the central business district of the city. The district's approximate boundaries are from Twenty-third Avenue on the east to Twenty-eighth Avenue on the west, and Fourteenth Street on the north to the south side of Eleventh Street on the south. It is bisected just south of Twelfth Street by the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. Key anchor properties within the proposed district include the Platte County Courthouse, Frankfort Park, the Evans Hotel, the Gottberg Garage, the Union Pacific Depot and the Lincoln Highway Garage.

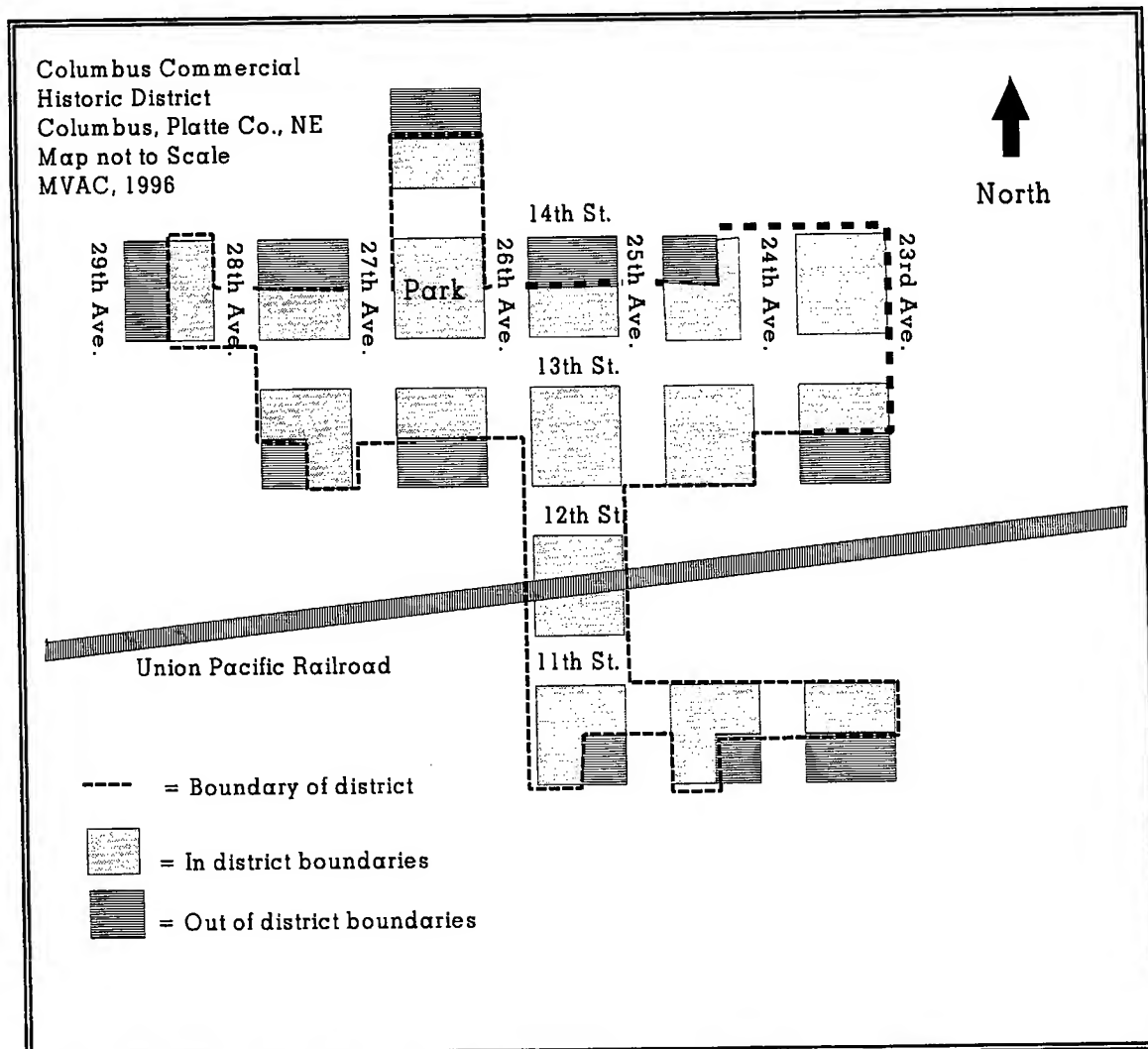


FIGURE 32 - PROPOSED COLUMBUS COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARIES, 1996, NSHS

## BRIEF HISTORY OF COLUMBUS COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Columbus Commercial Historic District has provided a variety of services and goods throughout its history. As a trade center along the overland trail, the mainline of the Union Pacific track, and the Lincoln and Meridian highways, Columbus businesses were required to modify with the changing needs of the region. Due to this flexibility, the commercial hub enjoyed constant growth up to the Great Depression and World War II. After the war, the central business district has experienced a prosperous economy which continues to the present day.

Columbus, founded in 1856, developed near the overland trail which followed the Platte River. Early businesses in Columbus began operating along Seventh Street near the traffic along the river. A decade later, in 1866, the main line of the Union Pacific Railroad reached the community. This resulted in a physical transformation of Columbus. Due to the demands placed on Columbus as a railroad stop, retail stores moved north to border both sides of the rails along Eleventh and Twelfth streets.<sup>91</sup>

The commercial district grew in the 1870s due to increased farming in Platte County as well as Columbus' location on the Union Pacific Railroad mainline. In 1873, to satisfy the enlarging retail demand, eleven commercial buildings were constructed in Columbus.<sup>92</sup> A photograph of the Columbus commercial center dated 1873 shows two brick and six false front stores occupied by several drygood and grocery stores, a boot and shoe store, a news depot, a saloon, and a harness shop. A decade later, the commercial center of Columbus extended along Eleventh Street between Nebraska Avenue (aka Twenty-seventh Avenue) and L Street (aka Twenty-third Avenue). It also spilled to the north side of the tracks along two blocks of Twelfth Street and one block north on Nebraska Avenue and Olive Street (aka Twenty-sixth Avenue). A variety of retail shops such as bakeries, drug stores, clothing stores, hardware, dry goods, book stores, jewelry, and harness shops, as well as saloons, restaurants, hotels, banks, and fraternal lodges existed in the downtown.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> *80 Years of Progress, Columbus, Nebraska, 1856-1936* (Columbus, NE: The Art Printery, 1936), 5-6.

<sup>92</sup> "Platte County, Columbus Time Line," (1980): 4. Located at the Columbus Public Library, Columbus, NE.

<sup>93</sup> Please see introduction of Chapter IV regarding street name changes in Columbus. Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Map of Columbus, Nebraska* (1885).

Until the early 1870s, the commercial district of Columbus offered residents a variety of retail stores, despite a lack of local financial institutions to support their endeavors. Prior to the establishment of banks in the fledgling town, many Columbus residents used institutions in Omaha for their financial needs. In 1871, the first private bank in Columbus was established by Leander Gerrard and Julius Reed. Three years later, Abner Turner and George Hulst opened a second private bank in the community. In 1875, these two banks merged to form the Columbus State Bank. In 1880, a second banking institution opened under the direction of Andrew Anderson and Ole Roen. Two years later, Anderson and Roen, along with seven other men, incorporated to form the First National Bank (PT01-092). With the addition of the new Columbus Savings Bank Loan and Trust Company in 1886, Columbus housed three financial institutions. One year later, an outgrowth of this bank was incorporated as the Commercial Bank of Columbus and in 1899 it became known as the Commercial National Bank.<sup>94</sup>

The first bank organized in Columbus following the turn of the century was the German National Bank. Organized in 1906 under the direction of G.W. Phillips and Theodore Friedhof, the bank occupied a building at the southeast corner of Thirteenth Street and Twenty-seventh Avenue. Since Germany was an enemy to the United States during World War I, the bank was renamed the Central National Bank. Just prior to the war, the Farmers State Bank formed and the 1888 Gray's Building (PT01-107) was significantly remodeled for its new home. By the 1920s, Columbus housed six banks including Central National Bank, Columbus State Bank, Commercial National Bank, Farmers State Bank, First National Bank, and Home Savings Bank. In the early 1930s, as a result of the nationwide depression, all of the banks in Columbus closed with the exception of the Central National Bank. To support the financial needs of Columbus the Columbus Bank was organized and opened for business in the former Farmers State Bank Building in 1934. By the mid-1940s, the Columbus Bank and Central National Bank were the only banks in the community.<sup>95</sup>

Besides the typical money-making ventures found in downtown, fraternal lodges were often housed in the upper stories of Columbus commercial buildings. Fraternal lodges, which formed in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, provided

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<sup>94</sup> In 1905, the Columbus State Bank (PT01-102) occupied its new building. "The Columbus State Bank...." *Columbus Telegram* 24 November 1905; In 1917, the Commercial National Bank Building (PT01-108) was erected. "Will Build New Brick Block," *Columbus Telegram* 30 March 1917; Margaret Curry, *The History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Culver City, CA: Murray & Gee, 1950), 364-368.

<sup>95</sup> "Gooden and Ostram...." *Columbus Telegram* 30 March 1917; Margaret Curry, *The History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Culver City, CA: Murray & Gee, 1950), 368-370; *Columbus Nebraska Directory, 1923-1924* (Spokane, WA: Hadley Directory Co., 1923), 93; *Columbus City Directory, 1943-1944* (Columbus, NE: The Art Printery, 1943), 165.

social interaction for people with similar backgrounds. These groups offered a sense of companionship, and provided financial and emotional support to the community's infrastructure. Donations to medical facilities, scholarships, and public improvements--as well as insurance policies for members--comprised some of the projects undertaken by fraternal organizations. The largest increase of fraternal organizations in the Midwest occurred in the period after the Civil War until the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. Most of the fraternal organizations in Platte County were organized during this time.<sup>96</sup>

The 1870s mark one of the most active decades in Columbus for the organization of fraternities. The following is a list of the societies formed in Columbus in the 1870s and places them in chronological order: 1872 Eastern Star; 1873 Sons of Temperance; 1874 Odd Fellows (PT01-105); 1875 Knights of Pythias and Free Masons; and 1876 Daughters of the Rebekah and Good Templars. Meeting rooms for these fraternal organizations in Columbus were often located in the upper stories of downtown businesses. In 1905, fraternal meeting rooms were located in the city. The Elks, although not listed among the earliest fraternities in Columbus, also conducted fraternal activities in Columbus and rented space in the Rickert Building (PT01-121) and the Gray's Block (PT01-089). The only known building in the district erected by a fraternal lodge is the Masons/Ragatz Building (PT01-094). In 1915, the Masons and Henry Ragatz both contributed \$10,000 for the construct of a new building at 2711 Thirteenth Street. This building, which was designed by the architectural firm of Grabe and Helleberg, housed the Ragatz grocery store in the basement and first floor and the Masonic Temple in the second level.<sup>97</sup>

After the turn of the century, much of the commercial development in Columbus occurred north of the Union Pacific tracks. Based upon the 1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance map, both blocks 84 and 85, which were located between Nebraska Avenue (aka Twenty-seventh Avenue) and North Street (aka Twenty-fifth Avenue) and Twelfth and Thirteenth streets, were filled with businesses.<sup>98</sup> By the next decade, Columbus experienced a commercial construction boom, which is evidenced by the fact that thirty-five extant buildings in the

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<sup>96</sup> Barbara Wyatt, *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*, 3 vols. (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), vol. 3, Social and Political, 5-1 to 5-3.

<sup>97</sup> "Masons, Star, IOOF Among 1st Lodges," *Columbus Daily Telegram* (85th Anniversary Edition, *Metropolis*) 16 September 1940; *80 Years of Progress, Columbus, Nebraska 1856-1936* (Columbus, NE: The Art Printery, 1936), 8, 21; "Elks to Vacate the Rickert Building for Wholesale Co.," *Columbus Telegram* 14 February 1919; "Two Stores and Lodge to Occupy Gray Block," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 23 May 1924; "Modern Building and the Men Who Made It," *Columbus Telegram* 4 June 1915.

<sup>98</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Map of Columbus, Nebraska* (1902).

commercial district were built between 1910 and 1919. Since most of the vacant lots in the downtown existed north of the Union Pacific tracks, eighty-nine percent of the new construction occurred in this area. Even the 1910 Union Pacific Depot (PT01-091), which served as a vital link between the two commercial districts in Columbus, was erected on the north side of the rails between Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth avenues. By the mid 1910s, almost every lot between Murray Street (aka Twenty-fourth Avenue) and Platte Avenue along Thirteenth Street was occupied by a commercial building, indicating there was no longer a question as to which side of the tracks supported the main commercial district. Furthermore, the north side of the tracks still had vacant lots on the east, north, and west ripe for new construction.<sup>99</sup>

Shortly after the turn of the century, the entertainment industry began to flourish in Columbus. The construction of the North Opera House (PT01-115) in circa 1902 at 2402 Thirteenth Street represents one the first brick buildings erected on the north side of the Union Pacific tracks solely for the purpose of entertainment. By 1914, with the growing interest in movies, the North Opera House was renamed the North Theater. Theater owners began erecting architecturally significant buildings to present an enchanting atmosphere to patrons. These motion picture houses were usually located in the heart of the commercial district.<sup>100</sup> Both the 1916 Swan Theater (PT01-097), constructed at 2707 Thirteenth Street, and the 1926 Columbus Theater (PT01-125), constructed at 2408-2410 Thirteenth Street, stand as fine examples of the changing importance of theaters. Erected in the center of Columbus' downtown, these buildings display some of the most ornate architectural details in the commercial district.

Additional construction in the commercial district resulted from the placement of the route of the Lincoln Highway through Columbus in 1913. Prior to this time, accommodations constructed in the downtown focused on the clientele of the Union Pacific. Due to its location on the Union Pacific's main line, as early as 1885, hotels in Columbus included the Clothier Hotel [Clothier], Lindell Hotel, and Grand Pacific Hotel. By 1893, sizeable hotels such as the Meridian, the Thurston, and the Oxford (PT01-090) also provided rooms for travelers on the rails passing through Columbus. These buildings all resided upon corner lots and stood two to three-stories tall. In 1913, a new addition to the hotel industry in Columbus arrived with the erection of the Evans Hotel (PT01-131). It was located on a pivotal corner of the Lincoln Highway, at the intersection of Platte Avenue (aka Twenty-

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<sup>99</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Map of Columbus, Nebraska* (1914; 1925).

<sup>100</sup> Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988), 6.

seventh Avenue) and Thirteenth Street. If the Evans Hotel was full, motorists only needed to drive within a three-block radius from the route to find rooms at the Clother Hotel, Meridian Hotel, Thurston Hotel, Lindell Hotel, and Pacific Hotel.<sup>101</sup>

Besides hotel rooms, travelers also warranted the erection of new service garages in downtown Columbus. In 1915, as a result of the incorporation of the Lincoln Highway Garage Association, a service station known as the Lincoln Highway Garage (PT01-122) was built at Thirteenth Street and Lewis Street (aka Twenty-third Avenue). By 1930, this garage was sold to Ed M. Nielson and operates under that surname to date.<sup>102</sup> In 1921, due to increased business, Max Gottberg replaced his service station with a two-story brick building (PT01-003) at the 2804 Thirteenth Street. The Gottberg Garage, which was constructed at a cost of one-hundred twenty-five thousand dollars, served as home to the Ford Agency as late as 1946.<sup>103</sup> In circa 1923, the Grey Taxi Company and Garage (PT01-444) was constructed at 2323 Fourteenth Street. By 1927, the building was also occupied by J.A. Murcek Automotive Repair. Today, the building still services the motor vehicle industry as Trowbridge Ford. On the south side of the tracks, the O'Callaghan Auto Repair Station (PT01-483) was erected circa 1925 at 1065 Twenty-fifth Avenue. Like the Nielson and Trowbridge garages, it continues to function in the automotive business.

The first decades of the twentieth century in Columbus saw the establishment and construction of a number of new retail businesses. In 1911, the Galley Building (PT01-450) was erected at 2417 Thirteenth Street to provide space for Galley Dry Goods. Approximately two years later, both the Chicago Store (PT01-478) and Helphand Dry Goods (PT01-479) occupied new buildings on Eleventh Street. In 1918, one of the district's most distinctive retail stores was designed by Grabe and Helleberg Architects for Phillips and Friedhof (PT01-098) and erected at 1268-1270 Twenty-seventh Avenue. This building, which cost approximately sixty-five thousand dollars, was built adjacent to the 1917 G.W. Phillips Block (PT01-099). In 1929, George Schweser and Sons purchased the Phillips & Friedhof Building for use as a department store. The Schweser Store still operates in its

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<sup>101</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Map of Columbus, Nebraska* (1885; 1893; 1914).

<sup>102</sup> "Breaking of Ground...." *Columbus Telegram* 5 November 1915; "Articles of Incorporation," *Columbus Telegram* 12 March 1915; *Hoffhine's Columbus, Nebraska Directory, 1930* (Kansas City, MO: Hoffhine Directory Company, 1930), 123; Ron Saalfeld, Telephone Interview by MVAC, 17 April 1996.

<sup>103</sup> "Ford Agency to Have New Home," *Columbus Telegram* 23 April 1920; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Map of Columbus, Nebraska* (1946).

original location as a department store.<sup>104</sup>

During the second decade of the century, four production-oriented business were erected along Thirteenth Street in the commercial district. The Poesch Building (PT01-128) stands as the finest bakery/confectionary building erected in Columbus. This three-story building, constructed in circa 1911, resides at 2524 Thirteenth Street. In circa 1913, the Columbus Candy Kitchen (PT01-103) was erected at 2313 Thirteenth Street and one year later, the Braun Bakery (PT01-113) operated at 2405 Thirteenth Street. Even though production of goods in buildings located in downtown Columbus mainly revolved around edible products, a shoe factory was also located in Columbus. The most unusual industry in the commercial district of Columbus was the Reece Shoe Factory (PT01-455) built in circa 1913 at 2512 Thirteenth Street. This shoe company, which started in 1885 under the ownership of John



FIGURE 33 - POESCH BUILDING (PT01-128), COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, CA. 1911, ZIMMERMAN COLLECTION

Lutz and later sold to John A. Reece, produced wood sole shoes. These shoes, which did not conduct heat, cold, water, electricity, or acid, were used in foundries, creameries, and meat packing plants.<sup>105</sup>

By the end of the second decade of the twentieth century, a physical transformation occurred in the commercial district. Based upon the 1925

Sanborn map, almost every lot along Thirteenth Street between Twenty-ninth and Twenty-third avenues was occupied by commercial buildings. Additionally, all of the major commercial thoroughfares were paved. Perhaps the strongest presence in the district is the

<sup>104</sup> "A New Palatial Business Home," *Columbus Telegram* 20 July 1917; "New Fronts Are All Leased," *Columbus Telegram* 19 January 1917; "Schweser's Sons Operate 3 Stores," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 16 September 1940.

<sup>105</sup> "Two Reece Sisters, Columbus Business Women, In Feature," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 7 April 1930.



1920-1922 Platte County Courthouse at 2606 Fourteenth Street (PT01-001).<sup>106</sup> Prior to its construction, controversy ensued regarding the location of the county building. While some wanted it located several blocks southeast of the commercial center in Columbia Square (aka Courthouse Square and Columbus Square), others felt that it should be built on the north side of the tracks near the principal commercial district. The business people won the controversy, and a site north of Frankfort Park (PT01-132) was purchased by the county for twenty-thousand dollars. In November of that year, the members of the local Masonic Lodge laid the cornerstone for the courthouse. This building is still utilized for Platte County activities and it serves as an anchor for the commercial district, as it was listed on the National Register in 1990.<sup>107</sup>

The addresses and street numbers in Columbus had been changed based upon the 1918 Ordinance No. 305. First, all north and south facing properties located west of Twenty-first Avenue (aka Washington Avenue) were required to add the number "2000" to their previous addresses. For example, 302 Thirteenth Street would be changed to 2302 Thirteenth Street. Second, all north and south facing lots on blocks east of Twenty-first Avenue were evenly numbered on the north side starting with two and odd on the south beginning with one. This figure, combined with the number of the avenue, was used to provide an easily identifiable location. No longer would residents be confused over whether a property was east or west of Twenty-first Avenue. Third, many of the north-south streets were renamed in consecutive order with numbered avenues. This was not, however, the first time the north-south streets in Columbus were renamed. Just prior to the turn of the century, many of these streets were changed from a letter designation to a name.<sup>108</sup>

In the 1930s, automobile related-businesses continued to serve as the most predominant buildings constructed in the district. Even in the midst of the Great Depression, seven extant buildings were erected between 1930 and 1939. Four of these buildings were constructed to service the automobile industry. In circa 1935, the Goodrich Silverstone Store (PT01-095) at 2719 Thirteenth Street, the Nickolite Garage (PT01-446) at 1264 Twenty-third Avenue, and Maier & Son Blacksmith (PT01-482) at 1059 Twenty-fifth Avenue were built. Two

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<sup>106</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Map of Columbus, Nebraska* (1925); "Two Blocks of Thirteenth...." *Columbus Telegram* 19 November 1915; "Will Start Paving In July," *Columbus Telegram* 11 May 1917; "Getting Ready for Pavement," *Columbus Telegram* 29 June 1917.

<sup>107</sup> Barbara Beving Long, "Platte County Courthouse," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Listed 10 January 1990.

<sup>108</sup> "Notice to Property Owners to Adopt New Street Numbers," *Columbus Telegram* 31 January 1919; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Map of Columbus, Nebraska* (1899; 1925).

years later, a new garage (PT01-474) was also operating at 1059 Twenty-sixth Avenue. Two grocery stores were also erected during this decade including the 1937 Safeway Grocery/Executive Building (PT01-470) at 2716-2718 Thirteenth Street and the circa 1937 Nash-Dietz Warehouse at 2314 Thirteenth Street.

By 1940, Columbus was beginning to recover from the Great Depression and the *Columbus Daily Telegram* reported 175 retail businesses with 511 workers. Furthermore, these businesses brought nearly \$4.5 million in trade to the community.<sup>109</sup> However, with the onset of the World War II, only one extant building in the district was constructed between 1940 and 1946. In circa 1943, the Weil Packard and Studebaker Company (PT01-448) built a dealership at 2320 Thirteenth Street. This property, which presently houses the Trowbridge Motor Company, was the last contributing building in the Columbus commercial district erected within the last fifty years.

Columbus developed as an important commercial center along the Union Pacific tracks. From its inception up to the Great Depression, Columbus experienced steady growth and provided a variety of services and goods. Due to its location along the Lincoln Highway, peak construction occurred in the downtown between 1910 and 1919. Commercial development tapered with the arrival of the Great Depression. Furthermore, the United States involvement in World War II also hurt the local economy with its regulations on construction, production, and sales. Columbus survived the rocky times and in 1996 maintains an active commercial district. Although many of the buildings do not fulfill their original function, there are very few buildings in the district that are vacant.

## ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF COLUMBUS COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

The proposed National Register of Historic Places nomination of the Columbus Commercial Historic District represents a span of architectural periods ranging from the earliest buildings displaying Italianate features through turn-of-the-century high styles, to modern styles. With the exception of the fringe blocks, the buildings within the district are densely packed, and consist mostly of two-story brick commercial buildings interspersed with several one-story buildings and a few three and four-story examples. The most prominent high style of architecture visible in the district is Italianate. Based upon construction dates in the district, it is apparent that other than the slow period between the Great Depression and World War

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<sup>109</sup> "Columbus is Ideal as Place to Live, Work," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 16 September 1940.

II, Columbus has experienced consistent construction activity throughout its history. Out of a total of 127 buildings in the district, one-hundred are considered architecturally and historically significant, have relatively good physical integrity, and thus contribute to the historic character of the proposed historic district.

The first generation of buildings constructed in Columbus, from the mid-1860s to the early 1880s, was made up of primarily frame, false-front, one-story buildings. These buildings were located mostly along the south side of Eleventh Street. Due to their extended vertical facades which provided an illusion of taller buildings, false-fronts were often constructed in newly platted commercial centers. All of the false fronts in the Columbus Commercial Historic District have been replaced with second generation brick..<sup>110</sup>

In the last few decades of the nineteenth century, the architectural character of the commercial district began to change when false-fronts were replaced with one and two-story Italianate style buildings. Italianate style storefronts, constructed primarily in the 1870s and 1880s, were most often built of brick. Ornamental features include metal cornices with bold brackets, centered doorways, window surrounds, flat roofs, multi-pane windows, and decorative capitals on pilasters. These buildings were often erected with manufactured materials.<sup>111</sup>

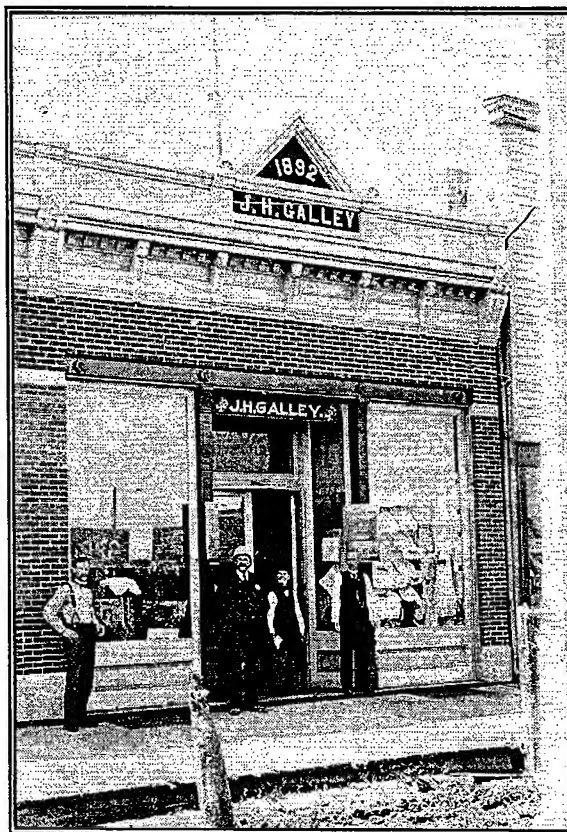


FIGURE 34 - J.H. GALLEY BUILDING (PTO I - 069), COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, CONSTRUCTED 1892, PCHS

<sup>110</sup> Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988), 244-245.

<sup>111</sup> Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988), 239.

In Columbus, the Italianate style represents one of the most prominent architectural styles in the commercial district. Eleventh and Twelfth streets, which serves as the oldest commercial thoroughfares, exhibit the finest Italianate style buildings in downtown Columbus. Constructed between the early 1880s and the early 1890s, the representative examples of Italianate style buildings in Columbus display brick construction. The 1882 J.R. Ernst Building (PT01-071) at 2501 Eleventh Street is the earliest extant Italianate building in Columbus. Ornamental features on the buildings include an elaborate projecting bracketed cornice and segmental arched window hoods. The 1886 commercial building (PT01-072) at 2417 Eleventh Street is the only Italianate style building in the district which spans two storefronts. This building displays arched windows and hoods, a triangular pediment, metal cornice, and a decorative string course. The 1891 J.P. Becker Building (PT01-090), located at 2502-2504 Twelfth Street, is one of two Italianate style buildings which feature corner entrances. It also is the most elaborate Italianate style building on the north side of the Union Pacific tracks, displaying a triangular pediment, metal bracketed cornice, finials, and triangular pedimented window hoods. The only extant one-story Italianate style property was constructed in 1892 as the J.H. Galley Building (PT01-069). Located at 2505 Eleventh Street, this building exhibits a metal cornice with brackets and dentils, triangular pediment, and finials.

The Italianate architectural style served as the earliest style of architecture utilized in the construction of extant Columbus business blocks. Business blocks, which were mainly erected in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, display architectural styles reflective of their period of construction. These buildings often housed a range of uses including retail stores, living quarters, and professional accommodations. Business blocks, which stretch two to three bays wide and cover an equal number of lots, were either built in the center of the commercial district or placed on corners to function as anchors. Business blocks built on corners usually place an emphasis on the entrance and the cornice to give a unified appearance.<sup>112</sup>

Business blocks in Columbus date from the early 1890s through the 1910s. The Henry Block (PT01-067), constructed in circa 1893 at 2523 Eleventh Street, is the oldest business block in the district. With its elaborate metal cornice and canted wall, it is a fine example of an Italianate style business block located on a corner. Later business blocks in the district include the circa 1909 Union Block (PT01-129) at 1267 Twenty-sixth Avenue, the circa 1909 Gray's Block (PT01-089) at 1258-120 Twenty-fifth Avenue, the 1917 Phillips' Block (PT01-099) at 1266 Twenty-seventh Avenue, and the 1919 Gerrard & Dussell Block at 2317

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<sup>112</sup> Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988), 6.

Thirteenth Street. These post-1900 business blocks exhibit twentieth century commercial vernacular features.

The architectural character of the commercial district changed around the turn of the century with the introduction of styles rooted in classical design. Romanesque Revival style buildings were typically adorned with arched entrances and fenestration, flat roofs, string courses, elaborate cornices, art glass, and corner entrances. This style, which was mainly constructed of brick or stone, was often used in the design of financial

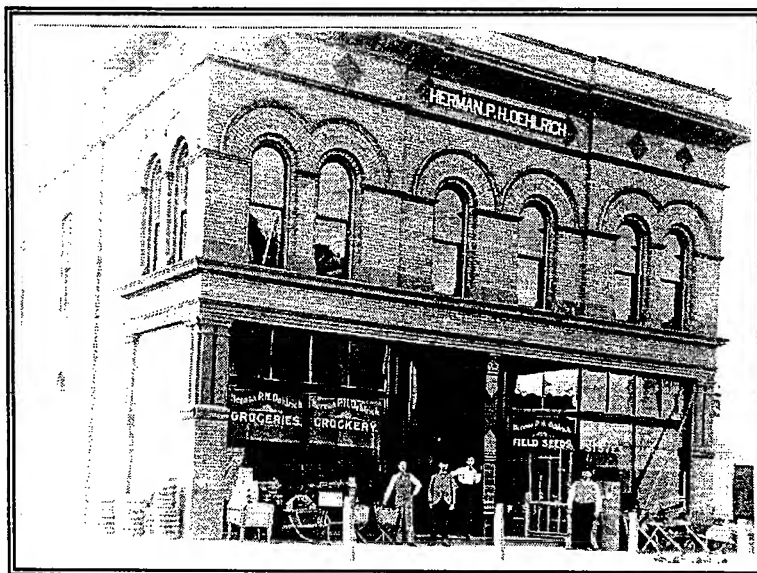


FIGURE 35 - HERMAN P.H. OEHLRICH BUILDING (PTO1-114), COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, CA. 1902, PCHS

institutions and government buildings to give a sense of stability and protection.<sup>113</sup> One of the earliest extant Romanesque Revival style buildings constructed in Columbus is the 1890 J.E. North Building (PT01-126). Located at 2502-2506 Thirteenth Street, this building displays large arched lintel windows, a canted corner entrance, a string course, parapet, and corbeling. The Abts Grocery Wholesale Building (PT01-123), constructed in circa 1900 at 2318 Thirteenth Street, also exhibits arched windows, pilasters, and parapet. Constructed in circa 1902 at 2403 Thirteenth Street, the Herman P.H. Oehlrich Building (PT01-114) has an overhanging bracketed cornice, arched lintel windows, name plate, and string course. One of the last Romanesque Revival designed buildings in the district is the 1910 Union Pacific Railroad Depot (PT01-091). The depot, which exhibits features of the more massive Richardsonian Romanesque design, utilizes polychromatic color schemes, rough cut stone to reflect massiveness in its construction, as well as rusticated stone window surrounds, stepped parapet walls, and curved elevations. Classical features on the building include triangular pedimented entrances and columns.

<sup>113</sup> Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988), 246.

Buildings incorporating the Neo-Classical Revival style of architecture were also erected in Columbus around the turn of the century. Similar to the Romanesque Revival style, this building design was also commonly used for public facilities. Typical Neo-Classical Revival style features include full-height classical columns, symmetrical facades, balustrades, pediments, and ornate cornices.<sup>114</sup> The 1920-1921 Platte County Courthouse (PT01-001), which is the largest example of this style in the district, displays smooth Bedford limestone elevations, pedimented entrances, a balustrade, and Ionic columns. Three banks in the district also display Neo-Classical Revival features. The circa 1885 First National Bank (PT01-092), located at 1251 Twenty-sixth Avenue, displays brick construction, an arched pedimented entryway, brick lintels with keystones, rusticated brick on the first floor elevation, and an ornamental projecting cornice. The Gray's Building/Farmers State Bank (PT01-107) exhibits a broken pedimented entrance, smooth stone elevations, pilasters, and an ornate cornice with dentils and modillions. This building, located at 2501 Thirteenth Street, was originally constructed in 1888 and completely remodeled in 1917 when it was purchased by the Farmer's State Bank. The 1905 Columbus State Bank (PT01-102) is located at 2601 Thirteenth Street. Neo-Classical Revival style details on this building include a cornice with scroll-shaped brackets, lintels with keystones, rusticated brick on the first floor elevation, and a parapet.

Spanish Colonial Revival style, constructed between the 1910s and the 1930s in Columbus, is characterized by red tile roofs, arched openings, cornices, and parapets. Exterior materials include stone, brick, and stucco.<sup>115</sup> Two buildings in the commercial district display this style of architecture. The Swan Theater (PT01-097), constructed in 1916 at 2707 Thirteenth Street, displays brick construction, curvilinear parapets, arched and porthole windows, and a central entrance flanked by bays. The circa 1937 Schmid Apartment Building, located at 2805 Fourteenth Street, exhibits a red tile roof, arched windows, and semicircular pedimented entryways.

Twentieth century commercial vernacular design was widely used in the early decades of the 1900s. Since this period paralleled the highest commercial construction in Columbus, a large number of buildings on the north side of the Union Pacific tracks display this style. Twentieth century commercial vernacular generally exhibits rectangular-shaped elevations.

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<sup>114</sup> John J.G. Blumenson, *Identifying American Architecture* (Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1981), 68-69; Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984), 342-345.

<sup>115</sup> John J.G. Blumenson, *Identifying American Architecture* (Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1981), 2-3; Marilyn W. Klein and David P. Fogel, *Clues to American Architecture* (Washington, D.C.: Starrhill Press, 1986), 49.

Variations on the exteriors of this building form are exhibited in fenestration, materials, and affixed ornamentation. Common features found on these buildings include brick construction, large plate glass windows on the first floor, simple second-story windows, decorative cornices, corbeling, pilasters, belt and string courses, and transoms. When erected in a row, these buildings often share common walls.<sup>116</sup>

The three-story Poesch Building (PT01-128), erected in 1911 at 2524 Thirteenth Street, is an excellent example of twentieth century commercial vernacular form. This brick-constructed building displays a parapet, stepped pediment, string courses, concrete sills, and a name plate. The Evans Hotel (PT01-151), constructed in 1913 at 1354 Twenty-seventh Avenue, exhibits brick construction and extends four-stories tall and three-bays wide. Details on the building include concrete string courses, rusticated brick on the first-floor, a cornice, concrete sills, and a concrete name plate. The 1924 Henry Gass Building (PT01-110), located at 1263 Twenty-fifth Avenue, has pilasters, parapet, corbeling, concrete sills, and a concrete name plate.

Modern broad-front buildings were later commercial vernacular additions to the commercial district. Dating between the 1910s and 1930s, this style consists of a double wide storefront braced with steel supports. The front elevations on these one-story buildings usually display two end piers, plate glass windows divided by thin mullions, transoms, and terra cotta panels.<sup>117</sup> Since this building type was conducive to the needs of the automobile industry, it



FIGURE 36 - LINCOLN HIGHWAY GARAGE (PT01-122), COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, CONSTRUCTED 1915, ZIMMERMAN COLLECTION

<sup>116</sup> Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988), 240-241.

<sup>117</sup> Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988), 249.

was often used in the erection automobile dealerships and service stations. The Lincoln Highway Garage (PT01-122), which was constructed in 1915 at 2304 Thirteenth Street, is a fine example of modern broad-front building. This building displays brick construction, large display windows, parapet, concrete string course, and concrete plaques with the word "Garage" are affixed to the building.

The Chicago Commercial style of architecture was utilized in the construction of one of the largest retail businesses in Columbus. This style, which is rooted in steel frame technology, is often characterized by geometric forms, sculptured terra cotta, window bands, and projecting eaves.<sup>118</sup> The 1918 Phillips and Friedhof Building (PT01-098), located at 1268-1270 Twenty-seventh Avenue, is a representative example of this style. It has a projecting cornice with brackets, parapet, terra cotta detailing, and vertical bands of windows dividing decorative stone and brick bands. Another prominent example of the Chicago Commercial style with a more vernacular influence is the Gottberg Garage (PT01-003). Built in 1921 at 2801 Thirteenth Street, the building features plate glass showroom windows on the first floor elevation, and bands of smaller windows on the second story elevation, and decorative brickwork which visually divides the two stories. The cornice is accented with two molded bands and pediments. The brick-skinned building can support the large windows because of the steel frame construction.

The modernistic period of architecture is represented in downtown Columbus with several related styles. Art Deco style buildings, generally constructed between 1920 and 1945, often display bas relief on the front elevation, stepped facades, ornamentation around the openings, and a string along the roofline. The slightly later style of Art Moderne is characterized with smooth elevation materials, rounded edges, window bands, and an overall streamlined appearance.<sup>119</sup> The 1926 Art Deco style Columbus Theater (PT01-125), located at 2408-2410 Thirteenth Street, displays a string course running along the parapet, Carrara glass, curved neon sign, and terra cotta relief with historical and organic figures. In circa 1914 the Columbus Candy Kitchen (PT01-103) was erected at 2513 Thirteenth Street. Most likely this building's facade was remodeled in the late 1920s with Art Moderne features. Detailing on this building includes stepped window surrounds, strong vertical lines which divide the

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<sup>118</sup> Marilyn W. Klein and David P. Fogel, *Clues to American Architecture* (Washington, D.C.: Starrhill Press, 1986), 36-37; John J.G. Blumenson, *Identifying American Architecture* (Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1981), 64-65.

<sup>119</sup> Marilyn W. Klein and David P. Fogel, *Clues to American Architecture* (Washington, D.C.: Starrhill Press, 1986), 50-51; John J.G. Blumenson, *Identifying American Architecture* (Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1981), 76-79.



facade, carved detailing, metal string course, Carrara glass, and a streamlined metal awning over the second floor entryway.

The physical fabric of the Columbus Commercial Historic District represents a broad span of architectural styles. While the most popular styles and forms erected in the city were Italianate and twentieth century commercial vernacular, other styles such as Romanesque Revival, Neo-Classical Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, Art Deco, and Art Moderne were also used in the design of downtown buildings. This collection of buildings serves as tool in understanding the commercial development of the community. Furthermore, the variety of resources, building types, and construction dates identified in the district mirrors the architectural evolution of a typical commercial center in east central Nebraska.

### SURVEY RESULTS OF COLUMBUS COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

The boundary for the proposed Columbus Commercial Historic District was selected based upon the architectural character of the downtown, as well as continuity and concentration of historically intact buildings. The proposed boundary includes an area approximately ten and one-half blocks in size. While two blocks of the commercial district are located on the south side of the Union Pacific tracks, the remaining eight and one-half blocks are located to the north. An entire block in the north central portion of the district exhibits no buildings and is utilized as Frankfort Park. Thoroughfares in the district included the east-west streets named Eleventh, Twelfth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth and the north-south avenues named Twenty-third, Twenty-fourth, Twenty-fifth, Twenty-sixth, Twenty-seventh, and Twenty-eighth.

For a property to be considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, high integrity (of exterior features) such as fenestration, doorways, ornamental detailing, materials, and form is necessary. Furthermore, all contributing buildings in the district must meet the fifty-year age requirement. Based upon city directories, Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Company maps, and *Columbus (Daily) Telegram* newspaper articles, construction dates were determined for each property. These dates were utilized to understand boom periods of commercial construction in Columbus, as well as subsequent alteration to individual buildings. This information, along with the integrity of each building, provides the data necessary to determine whether a building is contributing or not to the architectural and historical character of the district.

Within the boundaries of the proposed district, 127 properties were analyzed. One hundred and one (101) of these properties were considered contributing to the district, and the remaining twenty-six were labeled as non-contributing. Seventy-nine percent of the buildings in the district are contributing, thus, the downtown of Columbus retains an excellent ratio of architecturally significant buildings.

In conclusion, Columbus' downtown, which exhibits a cohesive fabric, is a flourishing commercial hub. Buildings located in the district continue to thrive economically, as well as house a variety of businesses. This nomination is the first of a number of steps possible that Columbus residents may take to preserve and promote commercial historic properties. Besides the nomination, residents can pursue several other methods to enhance preservation in the community. First, as stated in the Introduction to this report, Columbus can seek Certified Local Government (CLG) status and form a local historic sites commission. Under the authority of the historic sites commission, the downtown can be listed as a local historic district. Second, the community of Columbus can adopt a preservation plan to guide the future of historic preservation activity in the city. Third, Columbus can apply for status as a Main Street community through the Nebraska Lied Main Street program. Fourth, once listed on the National Register, contributing property owners of income-producing buildings can take advantage of a twenty percent federal tax credit for historically compatible renovations. For more information regarding the above activities, please contact the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office (NeSHPO) in Lincoln, Nebraska (also see Introduction of this report).

## IV

## THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY IN PLATTE COUNTY

## INTRODUCTION

The Lincoln Highway, conceived in 1912 by Carl Graham Fisher, functioned as America's first transcontinental road. The route of the highway spanned the entire state of Nebraska and included Platte County. When traveling from east to west, the Lincoln Highway entered Platte County in the southeast corner and exited from the southwest corner. From its establishment in 1913, the course of the highway changed several times until its eventual realignment and renaming as U.S. Highway 30, which occurred a little over one decade later. Intensive survey of the Lincoln Highway served as a component of the NeHBS of Platte County. This thematic study included identification of intact associated buildings, structures, objects, and sites along all routes in the county. Furthermore, each of these properties was assigned a survey number, photographed, mapped, recorded on a field survey form, and a site plan was prepared. Based upon state road maps, road guidebooks, newspaper articles, and a map entitled "Platte County Historical Routes" prepared by Vern Zimmerman and Knole K. Keefauver, MVAC prepared a final map identifying all known routes of the Lincoln Highway through Platte County.

In 1919, the north-south streets in downtown Columbus were renamed to numbered avenues. With the Lincoln Highway designated through Columbus as early as 1913, guidebooks of the route include both the pre-1919 street names and the current names. Thus, the table located on the following page should provide the reader with the tools to comprehend the path of the Lincoln Highway through Columbus.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> "Notice to Property Owners to Adopt New Street Numbers," *Columbus Telegram* 31 January 1919; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Map of Columbus, Nebraska* (1899; 1925).

## STREET NAMES IN COLUMBUS COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

PRE 1899 NAME	PRE 1919 NAME	CURRENT NAME
L STREET	LEWIS STREET	TWENTY-THIRD AVENUE
M STREET	MURRAY STREET	TWENTY-FOURTH AVENUE
N STREET	NORTH STREET	TWENTY-FIFTH AVENUE
O STREET	OLIVE STREET	TWENTY-SIXTH AVENUE
NEBRASKA AVENUE	PLATTE AVENUE	TWENTY-SEVENTH AVENUE
Q STREET	QUINCY STREET	TWENTY-EIGHTH AVENUE

## BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY

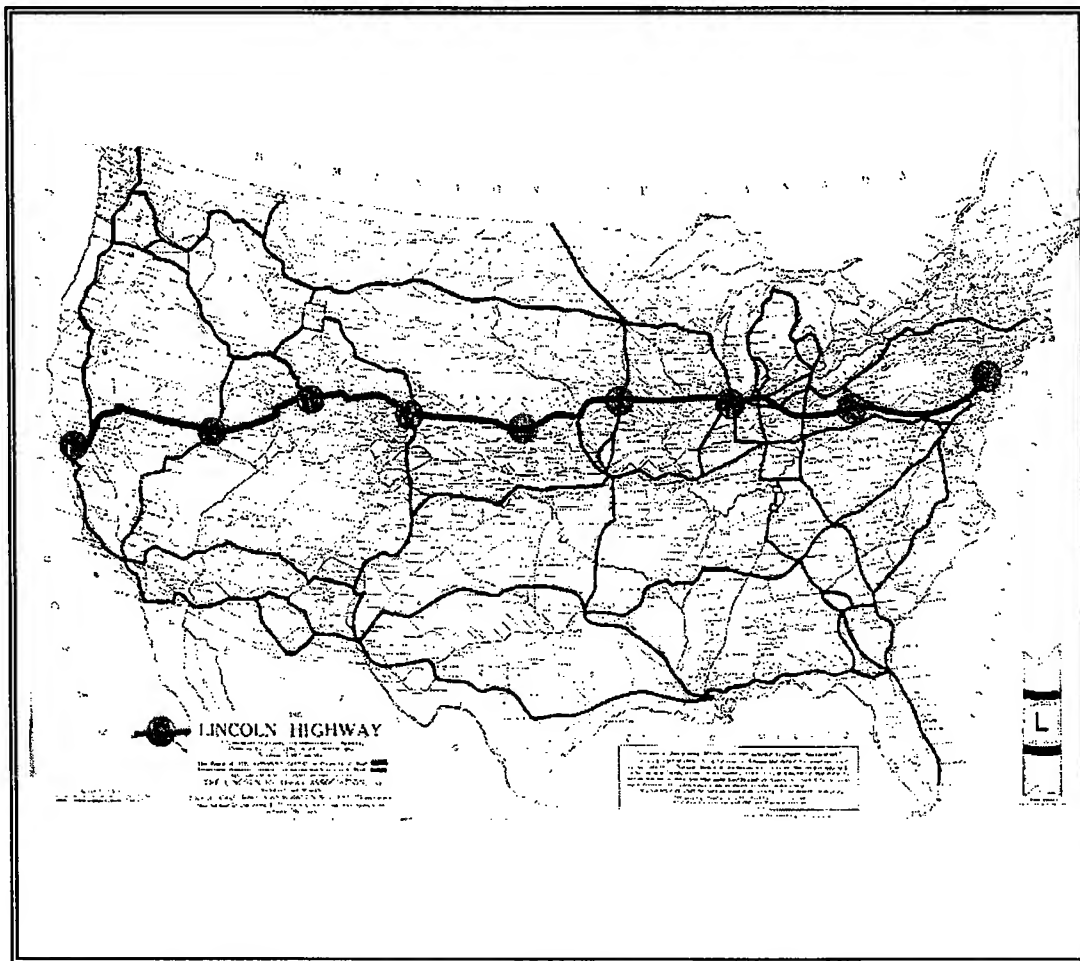


FIGURE 37 - LINCOLN HIGHWAY AS IT CROSSES THE UNITED STATES, LINCOLN HIGHWAY ASSOCIATION, 1924

The Lincoln Highway was first conceived by Carl Graham Fisher in September of 1912. Movers and shakers in the United States' young automobile industry were already acquainted with Fisher as the inventor of the carbide headlight for automobiles and the founder of the 1911 Indianapolis Motor Speedway, (aka Indianapolis 500). As a man of grand ideas, Fisher introduced his idea of a transcontinental highway to

a large party of his peers in late 1912. He thought the highway, which would be paved with gravel, could traverse the country in time to provide an auto route to the 1914-1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition. Fisher was certain that he could raise the proposed ten million dollars needed to construct the road, which he named the Coast-to-Coast Rock Highway, by receiving pledges and donations from the automobile manufacturers as well as the public.<sup>121</sup>

Carl Fisher's grand idea of a transcontinental highway was a timely concept. By 1910 there were over one-hundred and eighty thousand motor vehicles registered in the United States. Most of the automobiles were restricted to city streets, because winter and wet weather easily stopped autos from advancing either comfortably or quickly in the muck and mire that rapidly formed on the rural roads. Though many people saw the automobile as nothing more than an urban luxury, motortrucks were gaining popularity for moving and transporting goods. People desired good roads, and many saw the advantage of a transcontinental highway.<sup>122</sup>

Fisher approached the large automobile manufacturers for donations and support. Though Fisher was unable to solicit the financial and ideological support of Henry Ford, who felt that roads should be built with taxpayer dollars, he did receive a large donation, and more importantly, organizational assistance from Henry B. Joy, president of the Packard Motor Car Company. In fact, it was Joy who suggested that the highway memorialize Abraham Lincoln by taking the president's name. In July 1913, a group of organizers, including Henry Joy, met in Detroit to form what was to be known as the Lincoln Highway Association. They filed articles of incorporation and appointed officers to oversee the future aspects of the project.<sup>123</sup>

Once the funding drive was underway, the selection of the route was necessary in order to solicit local support from states and communities through which it traversed. Though the details of the route took many years to set, the prevailing philosophy in route selection was well-stated in 1933 by Colonel Sidney D. Waldon, an executive committee member of the Lincoln Highway. Waldon wrote: "Our idea was to get a continuous route traversable through the largest portion of the year at the least cost. On that basis we selected the route."<sup>124</sup> Despite the intent of making the route as cost-effective and direct as possible,

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<sup>121</sup> Drake Hokanson. *The Lincoln Highway* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988), 5-6.

<sup>122</sup> Drake Hokanson. *The Lincoln Highway* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988), 7.

<sup>123</sup> Drake Hokanson. *The Lincoln Highway* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988), 11.

<sup>124</sup> The Lincoln Highway Association. *The Lincoln Highway: The Story of a Crusade That Made Transportation History* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1935), 51.

controversy continued around the selection of the route. Some states and communities which promised donations early in the planning stages made their pledges conditional upon the route going through their areas. In August of 1913, Henry Joy announced the path of the route at the annual Conference of Governors, stating all logical arguments for the chosen route and presenting the governors with a final road map.<sup>125</sup>

The Lincoln Highway began at Times Square in New York City and ended at Lincoln Park in San Francisco, a total of 3,389 miles. The proposed route left New York through Trenton and Philadelphia, crossed the Alleghenies to Pittsburgh, and entered Ohio near Canton. From there it continued into the Midwest through Van Wert, Fort Wayne, and South Bend, Indiana, and headed just south of Chicago. At that point the route cut directly west across Illinois and Iowa, crossed the Missouri at Omaha, Nebraska, where it connected with the original overland trail in the Platte River Valley. In Nebraska it continued through Fremont, Columbus, Grand Island, Kearney, North Platte, Brule, and Sidney. From Sidney it left Nebraska, entered eastern Wyoming where it passed through Cheyenne, and Laramie and crossed the Continental Divide at South Pass. The route continued through Utah to Salt Lake City, then entered Nevada at Ely and continued to Reno. The highway crossed the Sierra Nevadas at Donner Pass, continued west through Sacramento and finally ended in San Francisco.<sup>126</sup>

By 1914, when the directors of the Lincoln Highway Association began to realize that they would not be able to raise the ten million dollars necessary to prepare the road, they began looking at alternative goals for the association. The Lincoln Highway Association members decided to present the association as an organizational and educational body. They felt that through educational activities the association could convince local, state, and federal government to improve the road with public dollars. Henry Joy proposed that model roads could influence people about the need for improved paving through demonstration miles, which he named "Seedling Miles."<sup>127</sup>

The first "Seedling Mile" to be constructed through the Lincoln Highway Association's program was built in 1914 near DeKalb, Illinois. Donations such as portland cement from the Marquette Cement Manufacturing Company of Chicago, two thousand dollars from public subscriptions, and state donated engineers and road equipment combined to construct the stretch of road. The Seedling Mile program, which was the first tangible improvement

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<sup>125</sup> Drake Hokanson. *The Lincoln Highway* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988), 13.

<sup>126</sup> Drake Hokanson. *The Lincoln Highway* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988), 14, 15.

<sup>127</sup> Drake Hokanson. *The Lincoln Highway* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988), 18.

of the Lincoln Highway Association, was also the organization's first major educational program. Although the first Seedling Mile was constructed in Illinois, many of the early concrete roads were constructed in Nebraska. The second Seedling Mile to be constructed was in Grand Island, Nebraska in November of 1915, with the Kearney Seedling Mile dedicated only three days later. The Seedling Mile program which continued for a five-year period through World War I, sponsored over one million dollars of physical road improvements in five Midwestern states.<sup>128</sup>

The program must have had an effect on the good roads movement, because in 1916 Woodrow Wilson signed into law the Federal Aid Road Act. This legislation allowed federal tax money to be spent on road improvements. The act was timely, for with the United States participating in the World War I in 1917 and 1918, the main system for long-distance hauling--the railroads--were overcrowded and delayed. In order to alleviate the strain put on the rail systems, improved trucks and tires led to a heavier reliance on the road systems, specifically the Lincoln Highway, to transport material, troops, and food across the country.<sup>129</sup>

By 1925, federal highway aid became the major factor in the development of the Lincoln Highway. According to a 1925 report from the Lincoln Highway Association, "since 1917 the 11 states crossed by the Lincoln highway have spent, with federal aid, \$20,455,767 on the improvement of that road...Lincoln highway officials feel it conservative to estimate that the federal aid policy has at least doubled the rate of progress toward the completion on the Lincoln highway."<sup>130</sup>

By the mid-1920s travel on the Lincoln Highway was not considered a venture solely for the well-to-do or strong-hearted. As the roads became increasingly easier to travel and as automobiles became more sturdy, reliable, and affordable, auto touring was considered a popular way to vacation. Many communities along the Lincoln Highway encouraged auto touring by providing free, well-marked tourist camps. Before long, tourist camps gave way to privately operated cabin camps, where small, shed-like buildings allowed visitors to leave

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<sup>128</sup> The Lincoln Highway Association. *The Lincoln Highway: The Story of a Crusade That Made Transportation History* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1935), 129, 131 - 132.; Drake Hokanson, *The Lincoln Highway* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988), 82.

<sup>129</sup> Drake Hokanson, *The Lincoln Highway* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988), 82.

<sup>130</sup> "Federal Aid Greatly Speeds Development of Lincoln Highway," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 24 October 1925.



their tents at home. Motor courts, then motels were popular by the mid-1930s and '40s.<sup>131</sup>

In order to encourage the tourist to attempt a trip on the Lincoln Highway, the Lincoln Highway Association printed a number of publications to aid travelers. The first, in 1914, was a pamphlet giving detailed directions along the route, as well as emergency and first aid advice. The guide evolved through the years, with several editions. By 1924, the fifth edition of the Lincoln Highway guide book, dedicated to Carl G. Fisher, the "Father of the Lincoln Highway," included over five hundred pages of historical information, maps, and general data about highway improvements.<sup>132</sup>

With an increase in the use of automobiles and trucks, the federal government looked to remedy the confusion resulting from the large number of named highways in the United States. Additional pressure to improve the road system was also placed on the federal government by the "good roads movements"-- grass root organizations formed to encourage road improvements all over the country. Therefore, in the fall of 1925, the federal Department of Agriculture, which oversaw highway development in the country, announced a plan for a numbered highway system. Of the 145 roads designated by the department, seventy-nine traversed east-west and sixty-six crossed north-south. Many of the nearly seventy-six thousand miles designated were transcontinental roads, and all connected at least two states. The plan allowed for a uniform, national system of marking highway routes, a necessity which emphasized the growing number of motorists in the country.<sup>133</sup>

Most of the Lincoln Highway route was designated as U.S. Highway 30 under the new federal numbering plan. Whereas the Lincoln Highway route spanned from New York to San Francisco, U.S. Highway 30 extended from Atlantic City, New Jersey, to Astoria, Oregon, with several deviations from the Lincoln Highway along the route. Whatever the reason for breaking up the Lincoln Highway, and designating its sections with numbers, the Lincoln Highway Association began to lose its purpose to exist.

The Lincoln Highway Association board decided in November of 1927 that the group would end its active operations. Though annual board meetings continued for a few more years, the association no longer distributed guidebooks or educational materials. The Lincoln

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<sup>131</sup> Drake Hokanson, *The Lincoln Highway* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988), 87, 119-120.

<sup>132</sup> The Lincoln Highway Association. *The Lincoln Highway: The Story of a Crusade That Made Transportation History* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1935), 116.

<sup>133</sup> "2 Highways Through Columbus Designated In National System." *Columbus Daily Telegram* 19 November 1925.

Highway was rapidly becoming obliterated as the road markers were removed and new numbered federal highway shields were placed along roadsides instead.<sup>134</sup>

The last official action of the Lincoln Highway Association was the final marking of the Lincoln Highway route. Although named highway markers were banned from the federal roads, the Association successfully petitioned to have the route marked as a memorial to President Abraham Lincoln. In 1928, the Association developed a post made of portland cement which bore the Lincoln Highway insignia and a bronze relief medallion with the likeness of President Lincoln. The Association collaborated with Boy Scouts to place the posts in pre-designated locations along the route. Over three thousand posts were set in place on 1 September 1928 by Boy Scout troops across the country.<sup>135</sup>

Though the Lincoln Highway no longer had an official role in road building by the 1930s, the country was already convinced of the importance of good roads. Millions of dollars were pumped into rural road improvements during the Public Works Administration (PWA) and Works Progress Administration (WPA) programs of the 1930s. Though road improvements halted during World War II, highway development began again in earnest immediately after the war. By mid-century, America's dependence on the automobile led President Dwight D. Eisenhower to sign the 1956 Interstate Highway Act. Soon after, unprecedented amounts of federal money were used in the interstate highway construction of the 1950s and 1960s. Interstate 80 came to replace the route of the Lincoln Highway/U.S. Highway 30 as the primary route through the central section of the country in the mid 1960s.<sup>136</sup>

The Lincoln Highway began in the mid-1910s as a program to physically develop an "all-season" transcontinental road in the country. With difficulties in fund-raising and the overwhelmingly complex task of paving a road across the country at the time, the Lincoln Highway Association became resigned to the role as educators in the good roads movement. The Association's educational position undoubtedly paid-off, with the passage of federal legislation such as the 1916 Federal Aid Road Act, the 1925 numbered highway program and the Interstate Highway Act of 1956.

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<sup>134</sup> Drake Hokanson, *The Lincoln Highway* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988), 110.

<sup>135</sup> The two Lincoln Highway markers located in Duncan, Nebraska were erected under this program. The Lincoln Highway Association. *The Lincoln Highway: The Story of a Crusade That Made Transportation History*. (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1935), 222.

<sup>136</sup> Drake Hokanson, *The Lincoln Highway* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988), 131; "With New Machine in Use Interstate 80 Construction is Moving Ahead," *Grand Island Daily Independent* 17 October 1965.

## ROAD DEVELOPMENT IN NEBRASKA

The first governmental body in Nebraska to concern itself with the condition of rural roads was the State Board of Irrigation, which was formed by legislature in 1895. The board oversaw and regulated irrigation practices in the state, and was also responsible for bridge plans and specifications as an extension of those duties. As the first motor cars drove the

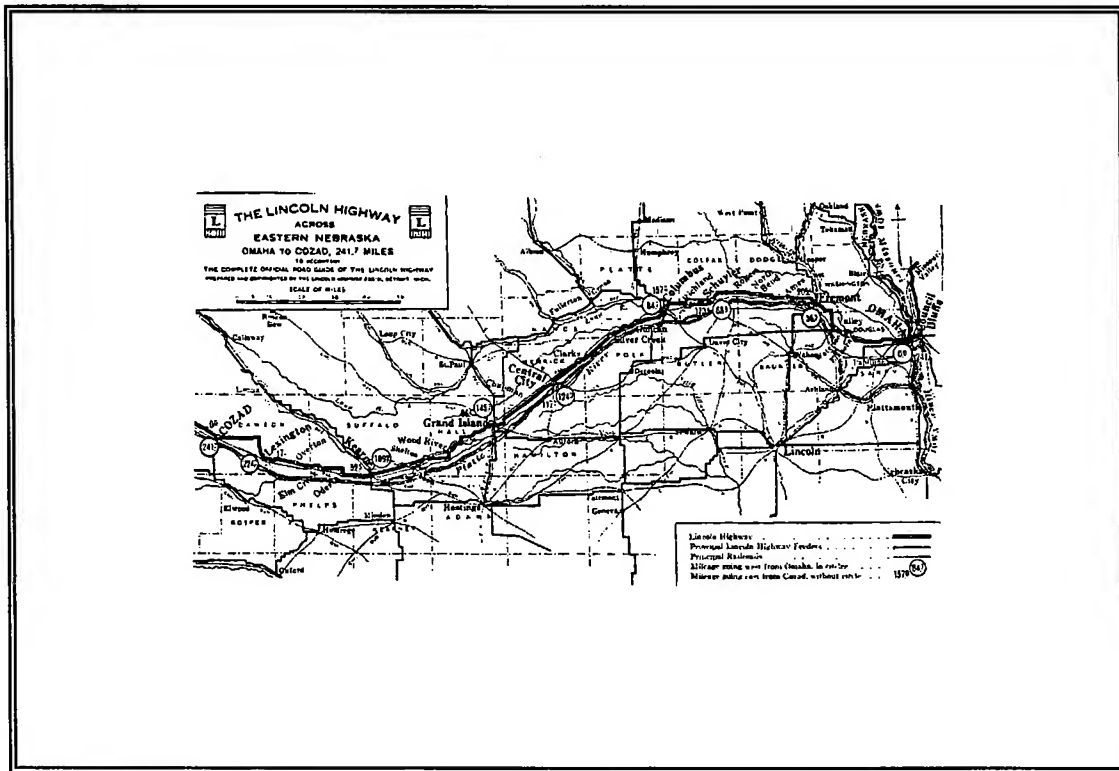


FIGURE 38 - LINCOLN HIGHWAY IN EASTERN NEBRASKA, LINCOLN HIGHWAY ASSOCIATION, 1924

Nebraska landscape, the State Board of Irrigation began to regulate fees for motor vehicle legislation, speed limits, brakes, lights and signals, and operation of motor vehicles near horses and other draft animals.<sup>137</sup>

As the number of automobiles increased in Nebraska, so did the need for good roads. In 1906, there were just over one-thousand automobiles registered with the Secretary of State.

<sup>137</sup> George E. Koster, *The Story of Highway Development in Nebraska*. (Lincoln: Department of Roads, 1986), 13.

By 1910, the number of motor vehicle registrations was more than eleven-thousand. One year later, the legislature changed the name of the State Board of Irrigation to the State Board of Irrigation, Highways and Drainage. Through this legislation, registration fees were used to fund county road development, and the state and counties jointly oversaw and funded bridge construction.<sup>138</sup>

By 1914, the State Engineer reported that Nebraska supported three major highways, including the Meridian Highway, which ran north/south from Winnipeg, Canada to the Gulf of Mexico (U.S. Highway 81); the Lincoln Highway, which ran east/west from New York City to San Francisco (U.S. Highway 30 in Nebraska); and the Omaha-Lincoln-Denver Highway (U.S. highways 6 and 34). Though all were reported as being in good shape in most places, several locations were deeply rutted, and in wet weather these areas on all three roads were undoubtedly impassable.<sup>139</sup>

With the passing of the 1916 Federal-Aid Road Act, Nebraska was one of the first states to apply for federal funds. The state legislature appropriated six-hundred forty thousand dollars to match the first Federal Road Fund appropriations, leading to a plan which connected all county seats with approximately five thousand miles of highways. Although World War I slowed some of the early road improvements during this period, by 1918 sixteen projects had been implemented with many more in the planning stages.<sup>140</sup>

By the 1920s, when the rest of the country was determined to have improved roads and interested in funding them, the state of Nebraska held to a conservative fiscal policy which would not allow the state to go into significant debt nor taxation to build and improve roads. The state highway engineer was required to conceive alternative ways of improving Nebraska's roads, and the primarily-rural state became a leader in the development of dirt highways. Additionally, after World War I, Congress passed legislation which allowed surplus military equipment to be transferred to the state highway departments. Nebraska gained hundreds of trucks and tons of surplus materials. County road departments bought

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<sup>138</sup> George E. Koster, *The Story of Highway Development in Nebraska* (Lincoln: Department of Roads, 1986), 14.

<sup>139</sup> George E. Koster, *The Story of Highway Development in Nebraska* (Lincoln: Department of Roads, 1986), 15.

<sup>140</sup> George E. Koster, *The Story of Highway Development in Nebraska* (Lincoln: Department of Roads, 1986), 17.

much of this equipment and used it well into the 1930s to improve and maintain their "dirt" roads.<sup>141</sup>

Although Nebraskans suffered due to low agricultural prices and wages during the Great Depression, road development in the state continued. Low cost of construction materials and diminished wages allowed the state and county governments to better afford road improvements. The nature of federal funding also assisted Nebraska during the depression years. In 1931 Nebraska was awarded over four million dollars in emergency federal-aid money for highway construction and repair. This money was the first to be apportioned which eased the burden for the Nebraska taxpayer by not requiring a state match.<sup>142</sup>

New Deal programs which were implemented as early as 1933 also aided highway construction in Nebraska. The National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) allowed Nebraska nearly eight million dollars for highway improvements. The Civil Works Administration (CWA) employed over six thousand men primarily for manual jobs, including clearing ditches, repairing bridges and planting trees. Of all state highway work which was accomplished between 1930 and 1936, seventy percent was attained through emergency federal funding.<sup>143</sup>

The war years of the 1940s brought very little road construction or improvement in Nebraska. Because most of the materials and equipment essential to road work was also essential to the war effort, projects became prioritized. As national security became an issue, the War Department and the Public Roads Administration identified highways which were critical for military purposes in the country. Known as the Strategic Network of Highways, they were given top priority for maintenance and materials. Three routes in Nebraska became part of this system, namely: U.S. Highway 75 from the Kansas state line to Omaha; U.S. Highway 30 from the Missouri River to Wyoming; and a route which spanned from the Kansas border to the South Dakota border, including U.S. Highway 81 to Norfolk, then U.S. Highway 275 to O'Neill, and U.S. Highway 281 to the South Dakota border.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> George E. Koster, *The Story of Highway Development in Nebraska* (Lincoln: Department of Roads, 1986), 22, 24.

<sup>142</sup> George E. Koster, *The Story of Highway Development in Nebraska* (Lincoln: Department of Roads, 1986), 31, 35.

<sup>143</sup> George E. Koster, *The Story of Highway Development in Nebraska* (Lincoln: Department of Roads, 1986), 38, 42.

<sup>144</sup> George E. Koster, *The Story of Highway Development in Nebraska* (Lincoln: Department of Roads, 1986), 44.

After the war, the last years of the 1940s required economic restructuring for the country, and very little road construction ensued in Nebraska. Major road construction in Nebraska was not to be seen again until President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the 1956 Federal Aid Highway Act. This legislation allowed for the interstate highway system in place today. This program allowed for major four-lane, limited access highways to be constructed with only a ten percent state match, and Nebraska began construction of Interstate 80 in 1957 near Gretna. Interstate 80 was completed in 1973 near Kimball. In the same year that interstate highway construction began in Nebraska, the state legislature reorganized the Department of Roads and Irrigation into three separate departments: one for roads, one for motor vehicles, and one for water resources.<sup>145</sup>

Nebraska has held an important role in the nation's history of transportation. The transportation routes, consisting of the overland trail, the Union Pacific Railroad and the transcontinental Lincoln Highway route, afforded Nebraska national recognition. As the use of the automobile became increasingly important in the state as a means of transporting both people and goods, the rural roads movement in the state took precedence. The New Deal programs of the 1930s and the road development that came in the state during World War II to support Nebraska's war industries led to a modern network of highways. Today, the state's road systems are enhanced by Interstate 80 and Nebraska's role as an important transcontinental transportation center continues.

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<sup>145</sup> George E. Koster, *The Story of Highway Development in Nebraska* (Lincoln: Department of Roads, 1986), 64, 65, 69.

## THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY IN PLATTE COUNTY

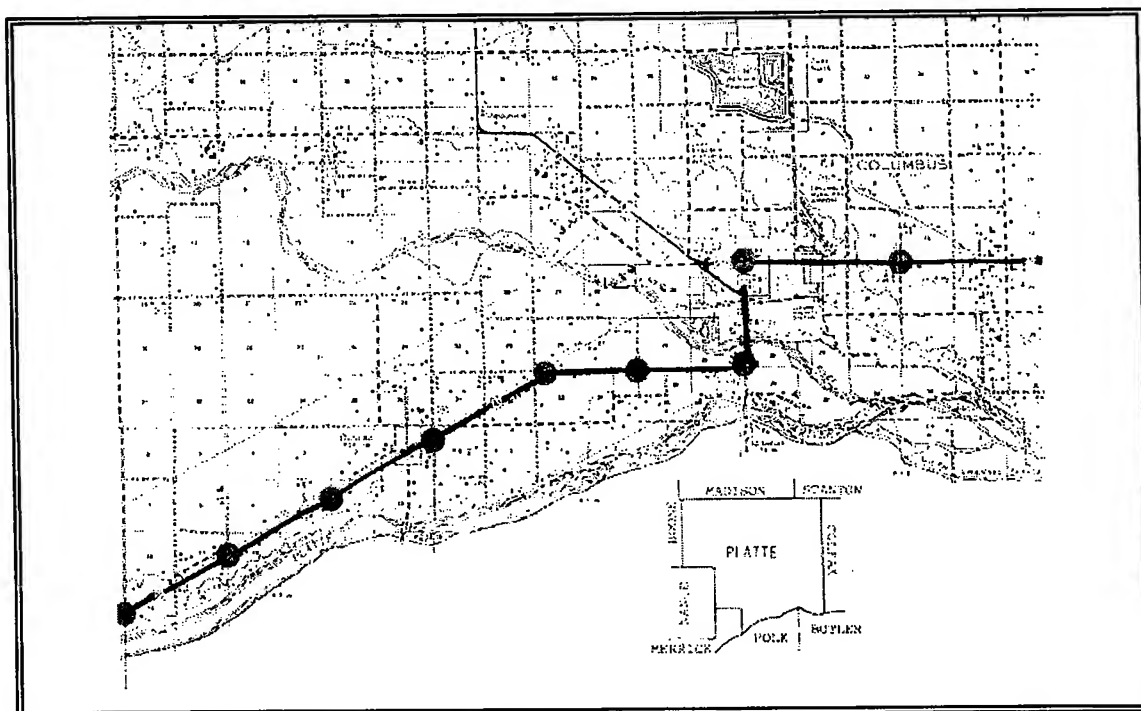


FIGURE 39 - LINCOLN HIGHWAY IN PLATTE COUNTY, NEBRASKA, POST 1935

The designated route of the Lincoln Highway, which ran the width of Nebraska, traveled along the Platte River. In Platte County, located approximately eighty-four miles from the eastern Nebraska border, the route traveled in a zig-zagged fashion through the southern portion of the county. Communities along its route included Columbus and Duncan. Platte County residents erected hotels, camp grounds, service and gas stations to accommodate the traveling public. These businesses were instrumental in maintaining the road's condition and were even successful in having a low lying section of it paved. In the mid-1920s, the Lincoln Highway was renamed U.S. Highway 30. Shortly thereafter, it was rerouted to pass over a newly constructed Union Pacific viaduct, and the Loup River Bridge, as well as run along the south side of the Union Pacific tracks west from Columbus. By the 1960s, with the construction of Interstate Highway 80, the amount of transcontinental travelers on the U.S. Highway 30 through Platte County declined significantly.

In September 1913, notification from the National Highways Association indicated that the North Platte Road rather than the Omaha-Lincoln-Denver Road (O.L.D.) had been selected

as part of the Lincoln Highway through Nebraska. Included along the chosen path were the communities of Fremont, Columbus, and Central City. Supporters of both the North Platte Road and the O.L.D. Road lobbied for the route designation by the Lincoln Highway Association. Based upon the first map of the proposed transcontinental highway, it appeared that the O.L.D. Road had secured the appointment. However, the North Platte Road was selected as the final route by the Lincoln Highway Association because it followed the path of the historic overland trail, served as the straightest route with the least number of grade crossings, possessed the highest population figures, and displayed the best road surface. Controversy continued between supporters of the North Platte Road and the O.L.D. Road, even after the decision to use the northern route.<sup>146</sup>

In October of 1913, Henry Ragatz, a delegate from the Columbus Commercial Club and designated Lincoln Highway Consul<sup>147</sup> for Platte County, participated in the National Roads Congress and a national meeting of the Lincoln Highway Association. Upon returning home one month later, Ragatz undertook a campaign to raise money for the association in an effort to ensure the construction of the highway. Ragatz sold 150 certificates and raised \$750 for the cause.<sup>148</sup> During that same month, the Platte County Consul, Commercial Club, and the Automobile Association collaborated to design the path of the Lincoln Highway through the county. They concluded:<sup>149</sup>

...that the Lincoln Highway should enter Columbus on the north-and-south road past the Zinnecker farm east of the Catholic church buildings; follow Fifteenth street westward past the hospital, school and monastery to Lewis street; then south on Lewis to Thirteenth street; then west on Thirteenth street to the Meridian road where it will turn south and cross the Loup river bridge.

After the meeting, several enthusiastic boosters painted the emblem of the highway on telephone posts along the route. The emblem featured a three-inch wide red strip at the top and the same size strip of blue at the bottom. A fifteen inch wide patch of white was located

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<sup>146</sup> "North Platte Road Chosen," *Columbus Telegram* 19 September 1913.

<sup>147</sup> "Consul" was the title used for Lincoln Highway representatives by the Lincoln Highway Association.

<sup>148</sup> "Lincoln Highway Unchanged," *Columbus Telegram* 3 October 1913; "Highway Fund Reaches \$750," *Columbus Telegram* 14 November 1913.

<sup>149</sup> "Fix Course of Highway," *Columbus Telegram* 10 October 1913.



in the center with the letter "L" located on the foreground. Also painted in blue were the words "Lincoln" and "Highway" with the first above the letter "L" and the second below.<sup>150</sup>

In November 1913, following a state meeting of Lincoln Highway consuls and under the authority of State Consul Frederickson, Ragatz selected the specific route through Columbus. Three guidelines were of concern to Ragatz in his decision: the incorporation of the straightest path; the best perspective of the city; and inclusion of the commercial hub. Based upon these factors, he designated:<sup>151</sup>

Thirteenth and Platte streets as the route for the highway through the business section of the city. It will turn onto Thirteenth from Lewis and will turn south from Thirteenth on Platte, thence west on Seventh to the Loup river bridge. I regard this route not only the most feasible, but also a reasonable compromise between Olive street and the Meridian road.

Controversy within the commercial district of Columbus quickly ensued. Due to the high traffic expected to pass on the Lincoln Highway, many commercial district occupants wanted it to pass by their establishments. This was the case, especially for business owners along Olive Street and south of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks on Eleventh Street. The controversy increased with verbal protests and even physical

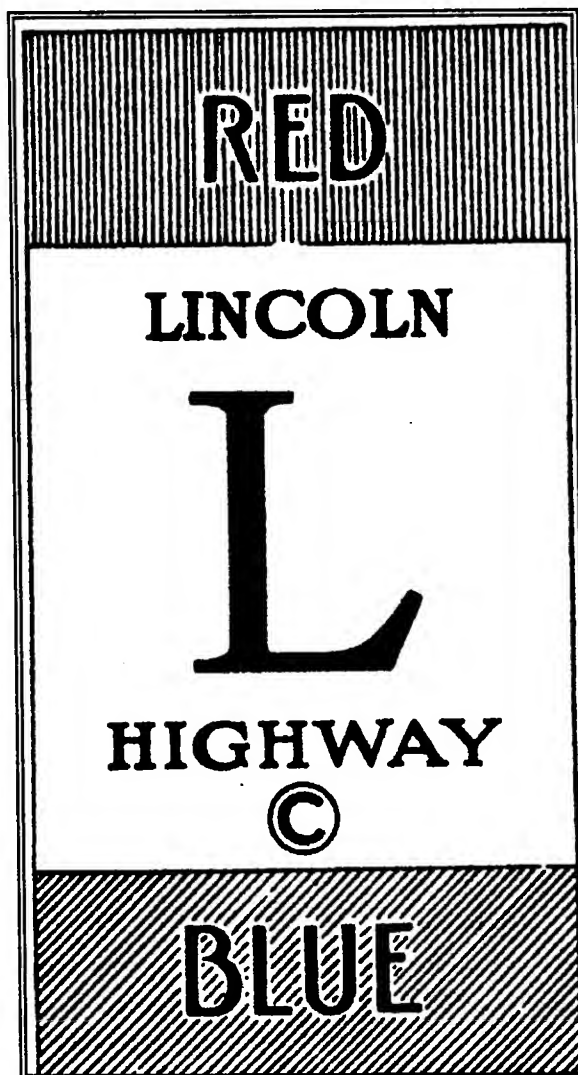


FIGURE 40 - DIAGRAM OF LINCOLN HIGHWAY MARKER, FROM *COMPLETE OFFICIAL ROAD GUIDE OF THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY, 1916*

<sup>150</sup> "Fix Course of Highway," *Columbus Telegram* 10 October 1913.

<sup>151</sup> "Returning From A Conference of Lincoln Highway Consuls...." *Columbus Telegram* 21 November 1913.

action. Some business people retaliated by unofficially placing "Lincoln Highway" markings on telephone poles not along the designated route, yet strategically close to their own business establishments.<sup>152</sup>

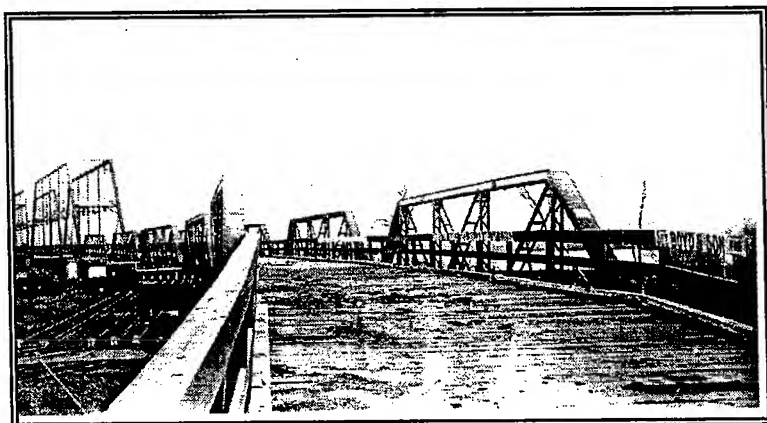


FIGURE 4 I - LOUP RIVER WAGON BRIDGE, EARLY 20TH CENTURY, COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, NSHS

Other disputes arose regarding which street would display the new name of "Lincoln Way." Both business owners along Olive and Thirteenth streets desired the name change and therefore submitted two separate petitions to the city council.<sup>153</sup> On 27 February 1914, a resolution was introduced to the city council and unanimously passed.

It renamed Olive Street the Lincoln Way and designated the following path of the Lincoln Highway through Columbus: "Seventh street from the Meridian to Olive, then Olive to Thirteenth, then Thirteenth to Lewis, then Lewis to Fifteenth, then Fifteenth east to Zinnecker farm . . ."<sup>154</sup> In 1914, the Lincoln Highway Association in Detroit, Michigan gave its approval to the renaming of Olive Street. Based upon this action, council members concluded that the route change was also acceptable to the association.<sup>155</sup>

In early spring of 1915, Consul Ragatz received a large number of inquiries from potential travelers on the highway. Ragatz, recognizing the magnitude of these letters to the local economy, informed the community that:<sup>156</sup>

<sup>152</sup> "Returning From A Conference of Lincoln Highway Consuls...." *Columbus Telegram* 21 November 1913 "Henry Ragatz...." *Columbus Telegram* 28 November 1913; "Officers Of the Lincoln Highway Association...." *Columbus Telegram* 17 October 1913.

<sup>153</sup> "Two Streets as "Lincoln Way," *Columbus Telegram* 13 February 1914.

<sup>154</sup> "Would Settle Controversy," *Columbus Telegram* 27 February 1914.

<sup>155</sup> Although the 1915 City Directory refers to Olive Street as the "Lincoln Way," there is no definitive evidence that it was used as the official route of the Lincoln Highway. The earliest source to give a detailed route through Columbus is the *Official Automobile Blue Book, 1920* which defines it as traveling south from Thirteenth Street on Platte Avenue. "Council Thanked For Activity," *Columbus Telegram* 6 March 1914.

<sup>156</sup> "Many Inquiries From Tourists," *Columbus Telegram* 19 March 1915.

Columbus is in a position to derive great benefit from the transcontinental travel this summer . . . It is located just far enough from Omaha so that touring parties must make their night stops here. Eastern people who are planning auto trips to the exposition are already studying their maps and guide books. In doing so they find that Columbus will be a night stop. This accounts for the fact that I am receiving scores of letters from all parts of the east inquiring as to conditions here. In every instance I am able to give the prospective tourist a line up on hotels and garages that will surely put at rest any fears they may entertain of finding a 'jerk-water' town without suitable accommodations. With four big hotels, five garages and another one or two in sight, Columbus is probably better equipped than any other city of its size on the whole Lincoln Highway to give first class accommodations to auto tourists.

Even though the North Platte Road had secured the official title of the Lincoln Highway, effort by promoters of southern routes, such as the O.L.D. Road and the Santa Fe route, continued to try and lure travelers away. After being notified of this activity through the Omaha Automobile Club, in 1915, the Columbus Commercial Club requested that the state consul raise money to promote the condition of its road and also made a donation of twenty-five dollars for advertisements. Later that year, the efforts of the southern routes were also counterbalanced with an abundance of publicity after H.B. Joy, President of the Lincoln Highway Association, traversed the highway and complimented Nebraska on the good condition of the road and noted that he was able to travel up to fifty miles per hour. Furthermore, the roads were very well marked with mileage statistics and relevant community information.<sup>157</sup>

In an attempt to encourage tourists to drive the Lincoln Highway through Platte County, road improvements and construction of automobile-related facilities were essential. In 1915, a Michigan-based company spent ten thousand dollars erecting red, white, and blue signs along the highway from Indiana to California. Later that year, based upon a state issued proclamation, Columbus' mayor asked business owners to close for two days and assist with road improvements in the county, which included the Lincoln Highway. By the end of year, as a result of the increased traffic passing through Columbus, ground was broken for the Lincoln Highway Garage (PT01-122) at the northwest corner of Thirteenth Street and Lewis Street (aka Twenty-third Avenue). Articles of Incorporation of the Lincoln Highway Garage

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<sup>157</sup> "Advertise Lincoln Highway," *Columbus Telegram* 14 May 1915; "Nebraska Roads in Good Shape," *Columbus Telegram* 25 June 1915.

Association were dated 6 March 1915. Capitalizing on the name to entice motorists, the garage sold and repaired vehicles. The one-story, vitrified brick building, which cost approximately fifteen thousand dollars, was designed by Charles Wurdeman and built by Henry Woerth.<sup>158</sup> This building serves as a fine example of early garages erected along the Lincoln Highway, as well as initiative by local business people to profit from travelers on the route.

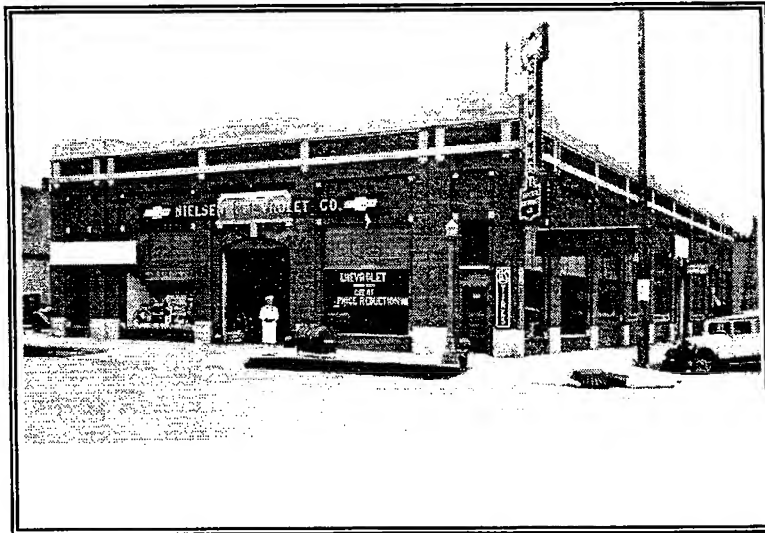


FIGURE 42- LINCOLN HIGHWAY GARAGE, COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, CA. 1916, PCHS

The year 1918 also marked a period of advancement for the Lincoln Highway in Platte County. First, a one-quarter mile section of poor road on the Lincoln Highway, located just west of the Meridian Highway, was improved. Second, new signs were placed along the route by a work force from the Southern California Automobile Club at the expense of the Lincoln Highway Association. This project,

which extended from Omaha to California, involved the raising of fifteen hundred enamel signs displaying the highway's insignia and mileage statistics. Third, the Columbus Commercial Club purchased an eight-ton road drag, which covered the entire width of the Lincoln Highway. The club dragged several hundred miles of road from November through February, and then allowed Supervisor Fred Bean access to the dragger.<sup>159</sup>

One of the most significant efforts to improve the Lincoln Highway in Platte County occurred in the summer of 1918 when Lincoln Highway Association Field Secretary, H.C.

<sup>158</sup> "Safety First Signs...." *Columbus Telegram* 6 August 1915; "Will Turn Words into Deeds," *Columbus Telegram* 8 October 1915; "Breaking of Ground...." *Columbus Telegram* 5 November 1915; "Articles of Incorporation," *The Columbus Telegram* 12 March 1915; "Interview with Ron Saalfeld," Conducted via telephone by MVAC, 17 April 1996.

<sup>159</sup> "The Duncan Road...." *Columbus Telegram* 22 September 1916; "New Signs Mark Lincoln Way From Omaha to Pacific Coast," *Columbus Telegram* 16 August 1918; "The Road Working Equipment...." *Columbus Telegram* 25 October 1918; Issues First Letter to Members Telling What Club Has Done," *Columbus Telegram* 15 August 1919.

Osterman, urged a group of Columbus business people to help support the construction of a "seedling mile." He further noted that the Association would donate three thousand barrels of cement.<sup>160</sup> Four months later, two stretches of road were presented for potential seedling miles, one west and one east of Columbus. The deciding factor for the chosen road depended upon which area made the highest contribution. Since the northeast section's subscriptions totaled \$2,700 and the southwest section totaled \$3,100, the latter section was picked. A newspaper article dated 8 November 1918 in the *Columbus Telegram* noted that:<sup>161</sup>

The eastern end of this proposed mile begins some distance west of the Meridian road, which runs north over the Loup river bridge. From this starting point on the Lincoln Highway west of the Meridian road, the 'seedling mile' runs one mile west on the highway, which in that section is known locally as 'the Lisco road,' runs along the south side of the Lisco farm and terminates at the southwest corner of that property known as 'the Lisco corner.'

On 24 February 1919, George F. Wolz, State Consul of the Lincoln Highway, and several other interested parties traveled to Columbus to get a look at the stretch of land proposed as the Seedling Mile near Lisco's corner. After getting their vehicle stuck in the exact location recommended for paving, Wolz strongly endorsed the project. One month later, the total money pledge for the construction of the seedling mile in Columbus reached \$18,640 including: \$7,000 worth of cement from the Lincoln Highway Association; \$3,140 from property owners located along the stretch; \$3,000 from federal and state funds; \$2,000 from both Platte County and the Columbus Commercial Club; and \$1,500 from Columbus Township. Later that summer, local support for the highway was encouraged by the *Columbus Telegram* which noted that between two and twelve cars passed the commercial district on the Lincoln Highway per day. Thus, it was vital for the community to assist the Platte County Consul A.R. Miller, and Supervisor Fred Bean to ensure continued business.<sup>162</sup>

Platte County residents began their efforts to pave the section of the road based upon the understanding that they would receive three thousand barrels of free cement from the Lincoln Highway Association. However, in 1920 the Association declined the request because they

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<sup>160</sup> "The Necessity of Improving the Condition...." *Columbus Telegram* 12 July 1918.

<sup>161</sup> "The 'Seedling Mile' of Road," *Columbus Telegram* 8 November 1918.

<sup>162</sup> "Yes, Lincoln Highway Consul Approves Seedling Mile Site," *Columbus Telegram* 24 February 1919; "Would Widen Seedling Mile," *Columbus Telegram* 7 March 1919; "Tourist Travel Breaks Records," *Columbus Telegram* 15 August 1919.

said they had no record of Platte County's application submitted by the Commercial Club two years earlier and further noted that it was no longer making such donations. Though not stated, the Association may have felt that the seedling mile project near Columbus was no longer current, as the seedling miles constructed elsewhere in Nebraska had been installed about five years earlier. Since so much effort had already been put into the paving project, local officials decided to modify the plan. To compensate for the loss of the free cement, in April 1920, the local newspaper reported that .59 mile of pavement and a portion of a flood apron on the Lincoln Highway project had been removed from the project to cut costs. The alteration changed the length of the stretch of road from 2.59 miles to two miles. The decision to shorten the project was granted by state and county officials such as Supervisors Ed Lueschen, C. A. Peterson, Fred Bean and N.J. Hemmer, as well as Commercial Club President A.R. Miller and Project Engineer W. D. Kimmel. The contract for paving the road was let to the Allied Contractors of Omaha for a cost of eighty-five thousand dollars. Out of this figure, twenty-five thousand dollars in local donations and sixty thousand dollars in state and federal contributions funded the project. In July of 1920, the culverts along the section of the Lincoln Highway, which extended from the "Loup bridge south and west to the Lisco corner, and then south to higher ground," were set in place.<sup>163</sup> By the next summer, Allied Contractors completed construction of the concrete section of road located southwest of Columbus.<sup>164</sup>

During the planning and implementation stages of the concrete section of road, local road supporters continued to advocate other improvements. In 1920, four road patrols were established in Platte County to oversee and fix highway conditions in the county. In regard to the Lincoln Highway, one truck patrol was stationed at Duncan to care for the Lincoln Highway from the western edge of the proposed seedling mile project to the Merrick County border. Another tractor oversaw a stretch of the Lincoln Highway from Colfax County to the city of Columbus. Over the next several years, Platte County also added two army trucks, donated to the state by the federal government, and a four thousand dollar grader to its supply of roadwork equipment. Additional work along the Lincoln Highway during this period included the erection of new markers from Nebraska to California. Merle Emerson and A. L. Blood, employees for the Western Automobile Association, placed markers at intersections and directional change points. These metal markers, which measured twenty-

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<sup>163</sup> "Paving Project Cut to 2 Miles," *Columbus Telegram* 30 April 1920; "U.P. Promises Load of Gravel for Meridian," *Columbus Telegram* 16 July 1920.

<sup>164</sup> Although residents refer to this section of road as a "seedling mile" it was never officially designated as such because it was not constructed with the final assistance of the Lincoln Highway Association. "Concrete on Lincoln Highway Is Completed," *Columbus Telegram* 5 August 1921.

four by thirty inches on top of a twelve-foot post, included information of nearby towns and mileage figures.<sup>165</sup>

With the increase of travelers, route books were published to inform motorists regarding routes, road conditions, mileage, accommodations, and listings of local, county, and state Lincoln Highway Consuls. The *Official Automobile Blue Book, 1920*, stated that the route of the Lincoln Highway entered Columbus from the east on Fifteenth Street to Lewis (aka Twenty-third Avenue). It headed south on Lewis and turned right (west) at Thirteenth Street. It then jogged left (south) on Platte Avenue (aka Twenty-seventh Avenue) across the Union Pacific Railroad tracks and past the Eleventh Street commercial district. In Duncan, the Lincoln Highway ran in a southwesterly direction along North Boulevard to Sixth Street and then headed straight west.<sup>166</sup> The guidebook also noted that a southern "alternative route" through Lincoln, Nebraska provided better road surfaces during the summer months when the sandy road sections on the Lincoln Highway were sometimes impassable. Since this detour obviously bypassed Platte County, it was to the benefit of local residents to maintain the road to ensure travelers during the warmer weather.

The 1924 *Complete and Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway* reported specific aspects about the road through Columbus and Duncan in Platte County. It noted that motorists in Columbus would cross railroad tracks in three locations and travel on bitulithic paved road. The speed limit in this area was listed at ten miles per hour. Businesses located along the route included garages and gas stations, banks, Union Pacific and Burlington railroads, Western Union and Postal telegraph offices, an express company, and a daily newspaper. Upon leaving the west side of Columbus, the Lincoln Highway connected with the Meridian Highway and headed south across the Loup River for one-quarter mile where they split, with the Lincoln Highway leading west to Duncan. Although Duncan did not possess a hotel, it was able to offer travelers the assistance of two garages. Duncan, with a posted speed limit of eight miles per hour, also had a bank, Union Pacific Railroad access, retail stores, express and telephone companies, and a newspaper. Lincoln Highway

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<sup>165</sup> "Establishing Road Patrols," *Columbus Telegram* 2 April 1920; "Big Program of Road Work Ahead," *Columbus Telegram* 27 February 1920; "Buys Road-Making Outfit From State," *The Columbus Telegram* 25 March 1921; "New Marker Lincoln Way Omaha to Coast," *Columbus Telegram* 3 December 1920.

<sup>166</sup> Today, a grove of hackberry trees and a 1928 Lincoln Highway marker indicate the path of the highway through Duncan. *Official Automobile Blue Book 1920* (New York: The Automobile Blue Book Publishing Co., 1920), 51-53.

Association officials in the area included County Consul A.R. Miller, Columbus Consul J.R. Purness, and Duncan Consul John P. Sokol.<sup>167</sup>

In the 1920s, based upon information in the guidebooks and the city directories, accommodations to travelers on the highway in Columbus consisted of seven hotels and several camp sites. All of the hotels were located within a three-block radius from the

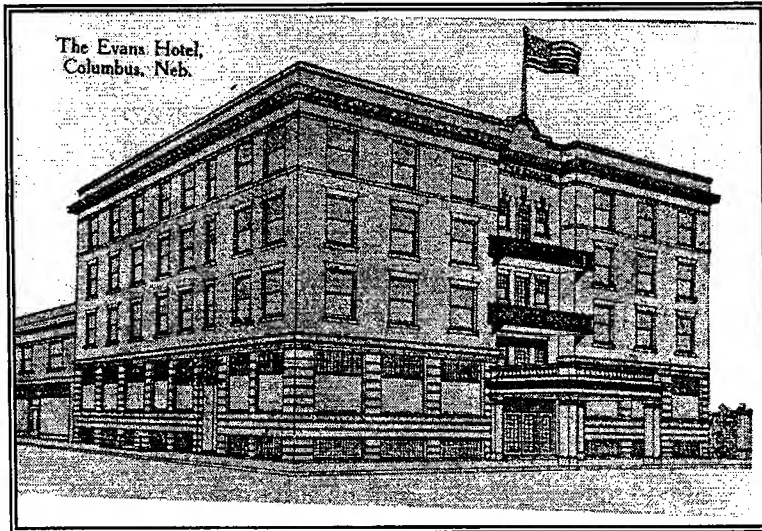


FIGURE 43 - EVANS HOTEL (PT01-131), COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, CA. 1920, ZIMMERMAN COLLECTION

Lincoln Highway, with Evans Hotel (PT01-131), Thurston Hotel, and Clothier [Clother] Hotel located directly on the route. During this decade, tourist camps were also offered to the more adventuresome travelers. The Columbus Commercial Club operated a free campsite in the northeast part of the city. Other campgrounds included the Park View Tourist Camp at the corner of Eighth Street and Thirty-third Avenue, C.H.

William's camp at Thirty-second Avenue and Eighth Street, and the L.B. Cassin camp at Twenty-third Street and Thirty-third Avenue.<sup>168</sup>

During the 1920s, based upon a *Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Map of Columbus, Nebraska*, three garages (including PT01-122 and PT01-444) and one filling station were located in the block northwest of the intersection of Twenty-third Avenue (aka Lewis Avenue) and Thirteenth Street. This was the corner at which the Lincoln Highway entered the commercial district of Columbus. The Lincoln Highway Garage (PT01-122), located at the northwest corner of this intersection, displayed a concrete plaque of the letter "L" at the corner of the

<sup>167</sup> *The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway* (Detroit, MI: The Lincoln Highway Association, Inc., 1924), 383-384.

<sup>168</sup> *Columbus Nebraska Directory, 1923-1924* (Spokane, WA: Hadley Directory Co., 1923), 102; *Hoffhine's Columbus Nebraska Directory, 1927* (Kansas City, Mo: Hoffhine Directory Co., 1927), 138; "Tourists Swarm Lincoln Highway," *Columbus Telegram* 23 July 1920; "Free Tourist Camp May Be Maintained by C.C. and the City," *Columbus Telegram* 19 March 1925; *Hoffhine's Columbus Nebraska Directory 1927* (Kansas City, Mo: Hoffhine Directory Co., 1927), 149.



building. After traveling on Thirteenth Street for four blocks the highway turned south onto Twenty-seventh Avenue (aka Platte Avenue). To the west of this turn, on the 2800 block, a variety of garages, services stations, auto dealers (PT01-003; PT01-523; PT01-524), and two filling stations lined the street. A third filling station was located on the northeast corner of Twenty-eighth Avenue (aka Quincy) and Thirteenth Street. After passing south across the Union Pacific tracks, another filling station was located on the southeast corner of Twenty-seventh Avenue and Eleventh Street. To accommodate travelers, several garages and two machine shops (PT01-483; PT01-496) were also located on the south side of the tracks.<sup>169</sup>

In 1925, conflict over southern routes in the United States and the Lincoln Highway again ensued. Columbus officials were informed that the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce would not route tourists over the Lincoln Highway and suggested they take a southern route. The national reputation of the route of the Lincoln Highway through Nebraska was crucial because an estimated fifty percent of the traffic through Platte County displayed out-of state licenses. Thus, to improve the route's status, the Columbus Chamber of Commerce donated seventy-five dollars, raised from hotel owners, garages, filling stations, restaurants, tire shops, and tourist camps, for the Lincoln Highway Association for advertising the route through Platte County.<sup>170</sup>

Two significant changes to the Lincoln Highway began in 1925. First, the Lincoln and Meridian highways were designated as federal highways.<sup>171</sup> Second, Lincoln Highway Director G.S. Hoag, State Consul George Wolz, and State Engineer Roy Cochran traveled the highway through Nebraska to determine which railroad crossings should be eliminated. During this trip, Hoag met with officials of the Union Pacific and they agreed that six of the seven railroad crossings between Columbus and Grand Island would be eradicated. Rerouting the road meant placing it along the south side of the tracks. In December of 1925, Union Pacific representatives agreed to lease a strip of land to Platte County which abutted

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<sup>169</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Map of Columbus, Nebraska* (1925).

<sup>170</sup> "Won't Recommend Lincoln Highway," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 3 September 1925; "Lincoln Way Gets Heaviest Foreign Tourist Traffic," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 19 August 1925; "Chamber Commerce Directors Vote \$75 To Lincoln Highway," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 14 August 1925.

<sup>171</sup> "2 Highways in New National System of Roads Hit Columbus," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 19 August 1925.

the southern edge of its tracks west of Duncan. This action resulted in the elimination of three crossings between Duncan and Silver Creek.<sup>172</sup>

In 1930, at a luncheon held at the Evans Hotel, hosted by the Columbus Chamber of Commerce, and attended by fifty Lincoln Highway representatives in the state, State Engineer R. L. Cochran talked about improvements to the route. Regarding Platte County, Cochran noted that a stretch from Columbus to Schuyler was paved and the viaduct at Columbus would be erected during the year. Cochran also noted that by the end of the year, if the city of Schuyler paved a one-half mile stretch, the Lincoln Highway would be paved entirely from Omaha to Columbus.<sup>173</sup>

By 1940, a record number of people traveled the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska. Based upon an electric eye automatic counting station in south central Nebraska, the daily average of vehicles on the road in August was a record 2,970. Out of this number, approximately eighty-one percent were cars and the remaining percentage consisted of trucks. One month later, the daily average was reported at 3,143.<sup>174</sup> In response to the increasing traffic on the Lincoln Highway, Columbus locals undertook an elaborate effort to welcome travelers through its community. A combination of a thirty-five hundred dollar donation from local merchant Theodore Friedhof and labor provided by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) lead to the erection of two arches (not extant) in 1940. Travelers on U.S. highways 30 and 81 passed under the arches in Columbus at Twenty-third Avenue and Twenty-third Street, as well as Thirty-third Avenue and Thirteenth Street. The arches, fabricated of wrought iron, exhibited the phrase "City of Power and Progress," and directed traffic off the highway through the downtown. Designed by Frank Willsey of Omaha and sculpted by Floyd F. Nichols of David City, the arches displayed images of a Native American male, female, and baby, along with a buffalo and a prairie schooner.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> "Elimination of Rail Crossings is Object of Highway Officers," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 14 August 1925; "Lincoln Highway to Be Re-Routed South of Track Next Year," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 14 August 1925; Union Pacific and County Arrange For Lincoln Way Lease," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 10 December 1925.

<sup>173</sup> "Reviews Progress in Improving the Lincoln Highway," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 17 April 1930.

<sup>174</sup> "Traffic on 30 is Heaviest This Year," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 18 September 1940.

<sup>175</sup> The directional arrow pointed visitors interested in passing through the downtown to head south on Twenty-third Avenue. Although this may be the local route from U.S. Highway 30 to the downtown, MVAC has found no documentation that this was part of the official route of the Lincoln Highway. Margaret Curry, *The History of Platte County, Nebraska* (Culver City, CA: Murray & Gee, 1950), 543; "Friedhof Announced Donor of City's Highway Arches," *Columbus Daily Telegram* 18 September 1940; "Interview with Vern Zimmerman," Conducted via telephone by MVAC, 27 March 1996.

Due to the construction of Interstate Highway 80 through Nebraska in the 1960s, the importance of the Lincoln Highway as a transcontinental road decreased. In 1996, it still serves as a major thoroughfare for communities located on the north side of the Platte River in eastern Nebraska. With the decline of traffic many roadside businesses perished. Building shells



FIGURE 44 - "COLUMBUS, CITY OF POWER AND PROGRESS," POSTCARD, CIRCA 1940, COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, ZIMMERMAN COLLECTION

and foundations of rural businesses are still visible along U.S. Highway 30. However, the resources are deteriorating due to a lack of use and upkeep. In urban areas, many Lincoln Highway related properties are still extant, but have been converted into other businesses to survive the changing economy.

## SURVEY RESULTS OF THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY IN PLATTE COUNTY

The intensive survey of the Lincoln Highway in Platte County defined the physical development of the road, as well as roadside businesses. No properties contributing to the intensive survey theme were identified along the highway outside the limits of either Columbus or Duncan. Furthermore, no physical section of road was surveyed, though the original and subsequent routes of the road through Platte County were determined to the extent that available information provided. A total of eighteen garages, auto dealers, and/or service stations, two highway markers, and one hotel were intensively surveyed in Platte County.

The largest resource constructed in the county related to the Lincoln Highway is the Evans Hotel (PT01-131). Located at the northwest corner of Thirteenth Street and Twenty-seventh Avenue (aka Platte Avenue), the hotel stands three stories tall. Corner lots were often typical locations for hotels because they provided multiple entrances. Constructed in 1913, the Evans Hotel was located at a major intersection of the Lincoln Highway where it turned

south off Thirteenth Street to Platte Avenue (aka Twenty-seventh Avenue). It stands as the only intact hotel in the county associated with the highway.

In downtown Columbus, twelve service stations, auto dealers, and/or garages were associated with the Lincoln Highway. Automobile-related facilities in Columbus were studied in approximately a three-block radius from the route of the Lincoln Highway. Two auto sales and service businesses (PT01-136; PT01-444) were surveyed on Fourteenth Street. An auto repair shop (PT01-446) was identified one-half block south of the intersection of Twenty-third Avenue and Thirteenth Street. Along the main thoroughfare of the commercial district, Thirteenth Street, a tire shop (PT01-469), two auto repair shops (PT01-119; PT01-448), and two garages (PT01-117; PT01-122) were surveyed. An auto sales business and a garage (PT01-523; PT01-524) resides one block west of the intersection of Thirteenth Street and Twenty-seventh Avenue. Also located in this vicinity is one of the most significant Lincoln Highway related properties, known as the Gottberg Garage (PT01-003). Located at the northwest corner of Thirteenth Street and Twenty-eighth Avenue, it stands as the only two-story garage intensively surveyed in the county. Four properties (PT01-482; PT01-483; PT01-474; PT01-496), identified as garages, machine shops, motor freight terminals, and/or auto part stores, were intensively surveyed in the commercial district located south of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks.

In Duncan, two Lincoln Highway markers were surveyed. While one (PT04-025) was located in its original location at the southeast corner of North Boulevard and Main Avenue, the other (PT04-026) was relocated to a park at the northeast corner of Main Avenue and Ninth Street. These approximately two-foot tall, concrete markers exhibit an impression of the letter "L." The relocated marker, now situated on a concrete platform, still displays its bronze circular relief plaque of Abraham Lincoln.

Three garages (PT04-016; PT04-017; PT04-020) were identified in possible relation to an early route of the highway north of the tracks in Duncan. One garage (PT04-024), located on the south side of Lincoln Boulevard (aka U.S. Highway 30), may have been erected after the realignment of the road to the south side of the Union Pacific tracks.

Most of the garages along the Lincoln Highway in Platte County stand one-story tall. Commonly designed in the twentieth century commercial vernacular form, many of these buildings display brick construction with concrete details such as sills, lintels, and piers. Also represented in the survey are several austere, concrete block garages. Although many of these buildings have been converted into other commercial uses, they retain their original form. The most common external alterations to these buildings included the downsizing of windows and removal of doorways.

A two mile section of road was identified as the first paved stretch on the Lincoln Highway in the Platte County. Since it still functions as a section of U.S. Highway 30 and has been paved numerous times, its lack of integrity dissuaded MVAC surveyors from inventorying the site. It is important to note that this section of road has often been misrepresented as a "Seedling Mile." Based upon research of the *Columbus (Daily) Telegram*, the Lincoln Highway Association made no donations to the completion of the project. This concrete section of road was financed by local, state, and federal funds.

Eleven garages (PT01-003; PT01-117; PT01-119; PT01-122; PT01-444; PT01-446; PT01-448; PT01-469; PT01-474; PT01-482; PT01-483) and one hotel (PT01-131) in Columbus have been determined as contributing properties to the pending National Register nomination prepared for the Columbus Commercial Historic District. The 1928 Lincoln Highway Marker (PT01-025), positioned in its original location in Duncan, has also been identified as potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.



## V

## HISTORIC CONTEXTS

## INTRODUCTION

As discussed in the introduction, the main purpose of this report is to identify, at a reconnaissance level, significant historic properties. In order to identify what may be significant, it is vital to understand major trends in Nebraska history. Although this report mainly identifies properties that may have architectural significance, we still need to understand the motivations, trends and influences that caused our forebears to construct the buildings they did.

To achieve this understanding, the NeSHPO has developed historic contexts. A historic context is used to group related historic properties based upon a theme, a chronological period, and/or a geographic area. Contexts may often appear to be nothing more than common-sense groupings of buildings by category. It is important, however, to create these groupings in order to understand the overall historical evolution of an area and of a property type.

What follows is a description and definition of historic property contexts found in Platte County as part of this survey. First, each context is given a short definition. This definition is only part of the complete discussion of the context. For further information about contextual themes and definitions, please contact the NeSHPO. Second is a brief discussion of the types of buildings found in Platte County that fit into the particular context. Third is a list of properties found in Platte County that fit into the context and may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

A majority of the information regarding vernacular construction below is based upon a prominent work by Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings entitled *American Vernacular Design: 1870-1940*. Other sources utilized in this chapter regarding the architectural development of Platte County include Virginia and Lee McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses*, John J.G. Blumenson's *Identifying American Architecture*, and Marilyn W. Klein and David P. Fogle's *Clues to American Architecture*.

The following buildings (with exceptions noted below) have been emphasized because they have been determined to be potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Under the National Register criteria, a building, site, structure, or object can be significant at national, state and/or local levels under categories of historical significance; significance for association with a person; architectural, engineering or artistic significance; and/or significance due to its potential to yield further information (generally used for archaeological sites.)

### HISTORIC CONTEXT: RELIGIOUS/CEREMONIAL

This context refers to personal or institutionalized systems of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices based on faith.

Platte County contains a significant number of architecturally prominent churches. While most rural churches identified were typically of vernacular form, a majority of the urban buildings display high styles. Rural churches, which usually stand one-story tall, display frame construction, front gable roofs, and steeples. The design of vernacular churches is linked to the location of the front doors and the organization of the pews, as well as use of geometric lines and limited use of windows in contrast to wall space. The Gothic Revival style was the most common architectural designed used in Platte County religious buildings. This style often includes steeply pitched roofs, lancet openings, pinnacles, and battlements.<sup>176</sup>

Two churches and their associated buildings in Platte County have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Another six churches in the county appear to be potentially eligible for the National Register. They are as follows:

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<sup>176</sup> Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988), 12-13; Marilyn W. Klein and David P. Fogel, *Clues to American Architecture* (Washington, D.C.: Starrhill Press, 1986), 20-21



FIGURE 45  
PTOO-033  
MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
& NEW HOPE CEMETERY  
FRONT GABLE  
1881-1882  
PLATTE COUNTY (RURAL)  
LISTED ON NATIONAL REGISTER  
1990



FIGURE 46  
PTOO-035  
ST. ANSGAR LUTHERAN CHURCH  
GOTHIC REVIVAL STYLE  
1889  
PLATTE COUNTY (RURAL)

FIGURE 47  
PTOO-048  
FIRST WELSH CALVINISTIC METHODIST  
CHURCH  
FRONT GABLE  
1884  
PLATTE COUNTY (RURAL)

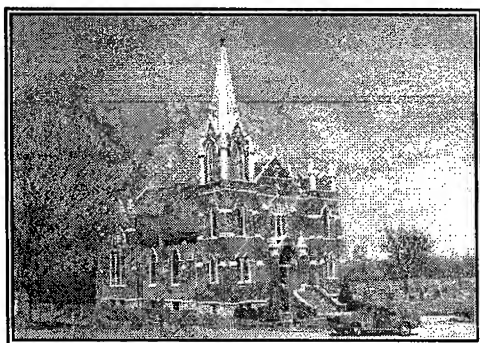
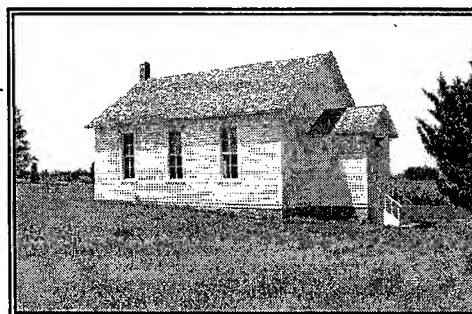


FIGURE 48  
PTOO-050  
CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH  
GOTHIC REVIVAL STYLE  
1920-1921  
PLATTE COUNTY (RURAL)

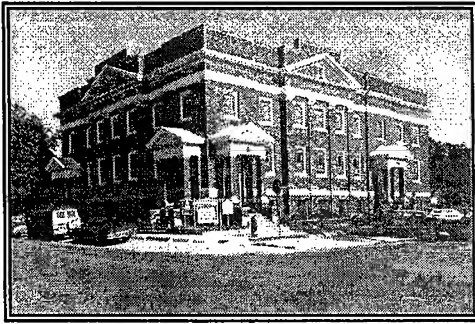


FIGURE 49  
PTO1-157  
FEDERATED CHURCH  
NEO-CLASSICAL REVIVAL STYLE  
1922  
COLUMBUS

FIGURE 50  
PTO5-001  
ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC  
CHURCH  
GOTHIC REVIVAL STYLE  
1893-1894  
HUMPHREY

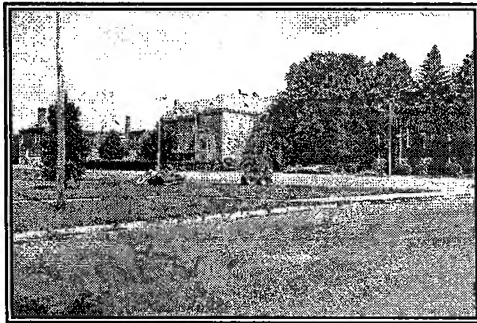
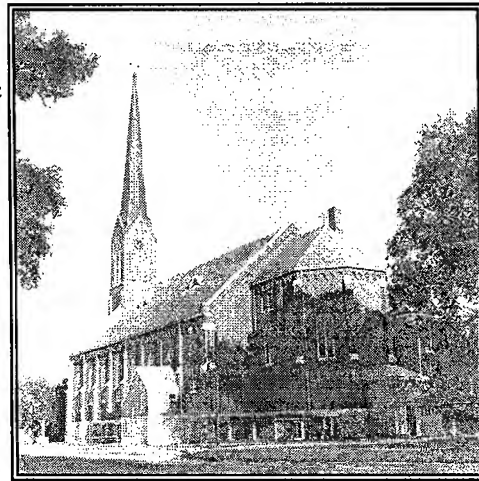


FIGURE 51  
PTO5-002  
OLD ST. FRANCIS CONVENT  
GEORGIAN REVIVAL STYLE  
1912  
HUMPHREY

FIGURE 52  
PTO5-003  
NEW ST. FRANCIS CONVENT  
SPANISH REVIVAL STYLE  
CA. 1923-1924  
HUMPHREY

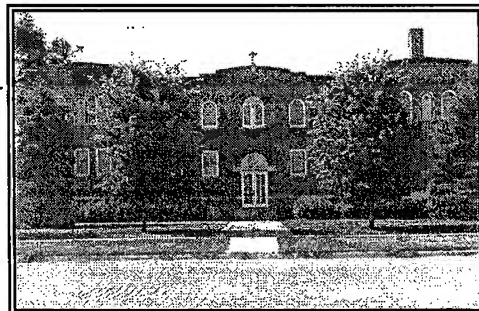


FIGURE 53  
PT09-001  
ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH  
SPANISH REVIVAL STYLE  
1924  
PLATTE CENTER

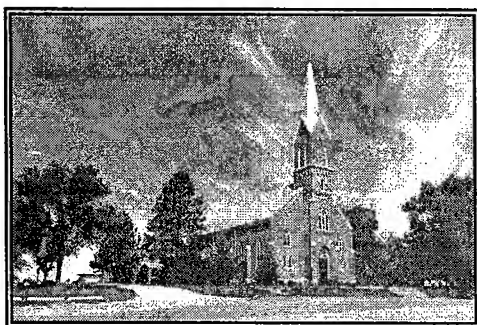
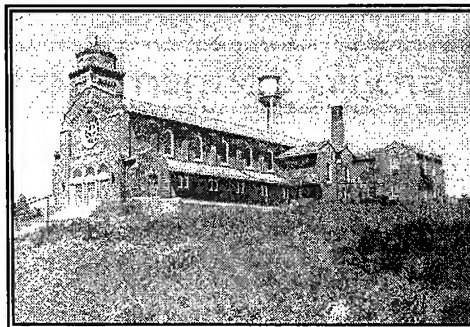


FIGURE 54  
PT12-001  
ST. MICHAELS CATHOLIC CHURCH  
GOTHIC REVIVAL STYLE  
1901  
TARNOV  
LISTED ON NATIONAL REGISTER  
1990

FIGURE 55  
PT12-003  
ST. MICHAELS CATHOLIC RECTORY  
ITALIANATE STYLE INFLUENCE  
1911  
TARNOV  
LISTED ON NATIONAL REGISTER  
1990

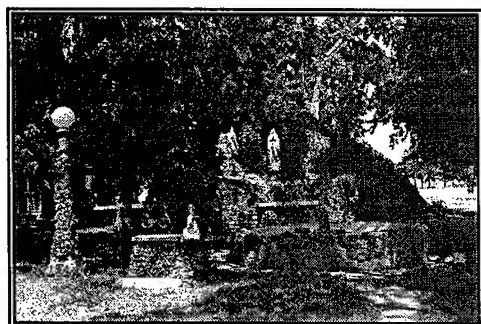


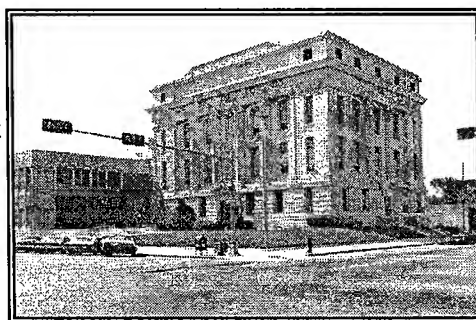
FIGURE 56  
PT12-004  
ST. MICHAELS CATHOLIC GROTTO  
1926-1927  
TARNOV  
LISTED ON NATIONAL REGISTER  
1990

## HISTORIC CONTEXT: GOVERNMENT

This context refers to the act or process of governance involving an organization or agency through which political authority and/or functions are performed.

Platte County has a number of properties associated with the context of Government. Two properties have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, while the third may be eligible for listing. The Neo-Classical Revival style, used in the design of the Platte County Courthouse, is characterized by a full-height porch with classical columns, symmetrical facade, balustrade, pediments, and ornate cornices. Romanesque Revival, another popular style of architecture used for public buildings, is characterized by masonry construction, round arched entrances, carved columns, and grouped windows.<sup>177</sup> The Humphrey City Hall is a fine example of Romanesque Revival style architecture. The most recently constructed government building of this group, the Columbus City Hall, was built in the Art Moderne Style. This design is often characterized with smooth facades and rounded corners, as well as streamlined features such as flat roofs and bands of windows. The following buildings are either currently listed on, or potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places:

FIGURE 57  
PTO 1-001  
PLATTE COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
NEO-CLASSICAL REVIVAL STYLE  
1920-1922  
COLUMBUS  
LISTED ON NATIONAL REGISTER  
1990



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<sup>177</sup> John J.G. Blumenson, *Identifying American Architecture* (Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1981), 42-43, 68-69; Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984), 342-345.

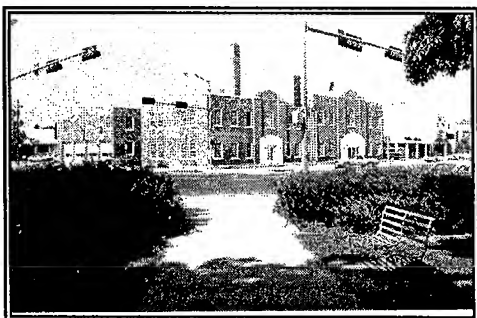


FIGURE 58  
PTO1-140  
COLUMBUS CITY HALL  
ART MODERNE STYLE  
1935  
COLUMBUS

FIGURE 59  
PTO5-022  
HUMPHREY CITY HALL  
VERNACULAR W/ ROMANESQUE  
REVIVAL INFLUENCE  
1902  
HUMPHREY  
LISTED ON NATIONAL REGISTER  
1996



## HISTORIC CONTEXT: SOCIAL ASSOCIATIONS

This context refers to organizations of people, other than religious\ceremonial or governmental, that have a common interest. This common interest creates a basis for affiliation and, generally, a patterned interaction.

One social/fraternal hall has been determined potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic places in Platte County. The Craftsman style, used in the design of the Izaak Walton League Lodge, is characterized with low pitched roofs, wide eaves, exposed rafters, decorative beams under gables, porches with tapered columns and/or piers, stone exterior chimneys, and square columns. Unique features on the Izaak Walton League Lodge are the tapered columns, which display several stones etched with the names of states whose leagues donated the rocks. The Izaak Walton League of America, founded in 1922, is a nationwide organization of conservation and environment-minded people, and was named after the sixteenth century British outdoorsman and conservationist.

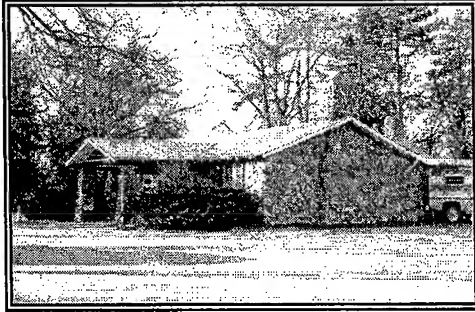


FIGURE 60  
PTOO-262  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE LODGE  
CRAFTSMAN STYLE  
1935-1936  
PLATTE COUNTY (RURAL)

## HISTORIC CONTEXT: EDUCATION

This context refers to the act or process of imparting or acquiring knowledge.

It is interesting to note that three of the four architecturally significant Platte County schools identified with the context of Education are parochial, possibly indicating the prevalence of religious institution in the rural sections of the county. Each of these buildings displays high style architecture, such as Georgian Revival and Gothic Revival, with brick construction. Georgian Revival style buildings are identifiable by the presence of the dentils, pedimented windows and doors, quoins, belt course, roof balustrades, two-story pilasters, and an extending central facades. Gothic Revival style buildings are characterized by steeply pitched roofs, decorated bargeboards, one-story porches, wall surfaces extending into gables without breaks, lancet shaped windows, and shaped parapets.<sup>178</sup>

Although no vernacular schools were identified as potentially eligible in the survey, it was a common form used for rural schools. Vernacular form schools, ranging from one to four room buildings, mainly stood one-story tall and were ornamented by the placement of the bell tower.<sup>179</sup> Based upon the *Columbus Telegram* a number of new rural schools were erected in the early 1920s. Ranging in cost from between six thousand and eight thousand dollars, these buildings were generally of frame construction and clad with clapboard and/or stucco. Common roof types included gable and hipped. The floor plans of these schools often included a classroom, kitchen, recreation room/community hall, and often space for an

<sup>178</sup> Marilyn W. Klein and David P. Fogel, *Clues to American Architecture* (Washington, D.C.: Starrhill Press, 1986), 14-15, 20-21; John J.G. Blumenson, *Identifying American Architecture* (Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1981), 18-19, 30-31.

<sup>179</sup> Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988), 12-13.

indoor toilet and library.<sup>180</sup>

The following buildings are either currently listed on, or potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places:

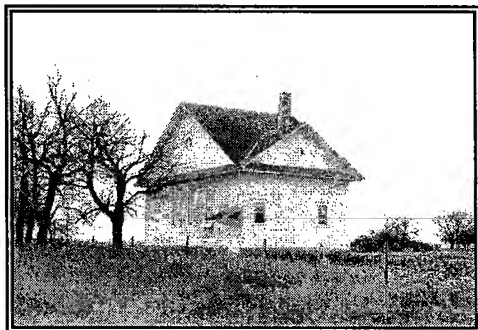


FIGURE 61  
PTOO-208  
MOUNT PLEASANT SCHOOL  
SIDE GABLE  
CA. 1920  
PLATTE COUNTY (RURAL)

FIGURE 62  
PTO5-004  
ST. FRANCIS SCHOOL  
GEORGIAN REVIVAL STYLE  
1906  
HUMPHREY

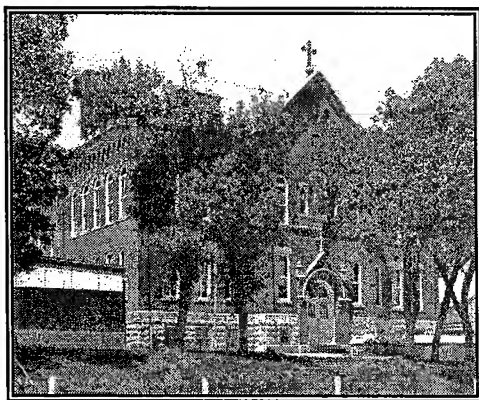
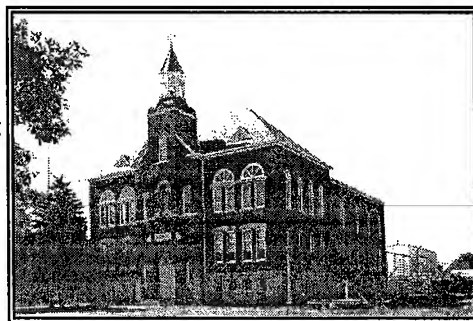


FIGURE 63  
PTO6-007  
HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC SCHOOL  
GEORGIAN REVIVAL STYLE  
1905-1906  
LINDSAY

<sup>180</sup> "District 64, Formally Opens New Modern Two-Room School," *Columbus Telegram* 22 October 1920; "District No. 51, Near Lindsay Dedicates New, Modern School," *Columbus Telegram* 26 November 1920; "First Stucco School Building in Platte County is Dedicated in District No. 57," *Columbus Telegram* 4 February 1921.

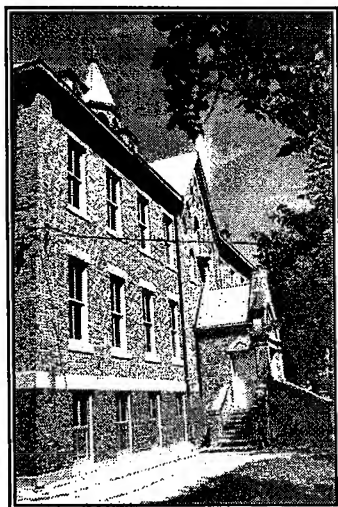


FIGURE 64  
PTI 2-002  
ST. MICHAEL'S SCHOOL  
GEORGIAN REVIVAL  
1911  
TARNOV  
LISTED ON NATIONAL  
REGISTER  
1990

## HISTORIC CONTEXT: AGRICULTURE

This context refers to any level of food production, including crops and livestock; and in varying degrees the preparation of these products for marketing.

Farmhouses surveyed in Platte County associated with the context of Agriculture range from vernacular forms to high style buildings. Neither sod nor log constructed buildings were identified in the survey. The majority of the farmhouses in Platte County were vernacular in form. These buildings, which stand between one and two-stories tall, include front gable, side gable, gable ell, cross gable, and gable T. A relatively high number of farmhouses in the eastern part of the county display high styles such as Italianate, Queen Anne, American Foursquare, and Bungalow. Overall, the most common construction method in the county was frame. Nevertheless, a few of the high style houses, as well as more recent houses, were built of brick.

Reflecting the variety of Platte County agricultural products, an assortment of outbuildings were constructed on area farmsteads. A majority of barns in the county display frame construction, gambrel roofs, and wood cladding. Granaries, animal sheds, storage sheds, machine sheds, and silos were also common outbuildings identified on many of the surveyed farmsteads. Often these buildings were positioned in close proximity to the main house to expedite farm work. By the third decade of the twentieth century, as a result of the increased rural use and ownership of automobiles, many farmsteads housed modern garages. During this period, garages erected on older farmsteads contrasted with the main house due to the use of wider clapboard and moderately pitched roofs.



Undoubtedly, some rural outbuildings followed standard plans. In the mid 1920s, the Agricultural Extension Program of the University of Nebraska published bulletins with plans, specifications, and estimated costs for outbuildings including barns, sheds, poultry houses and even farmhouses. Platte County farmers were made aware of these bulletins through articles carried in the *Columbus Daily Telegram*.<sup>181</sup>

The following properties are either currently listed on, or potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places:

FIGURE 65  
PTOO-075  
FARMSTEAD  
AMERICAN FOURSQUARE  
CA. 1910  
PLATTE COUNTY (RURAL)

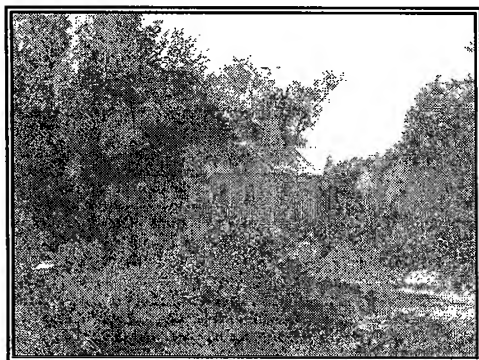
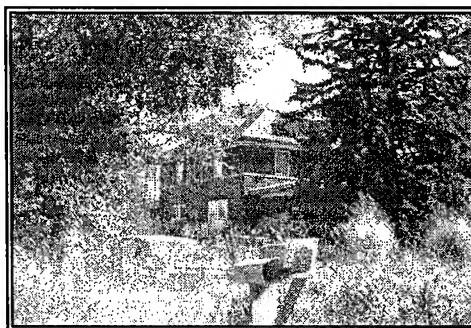
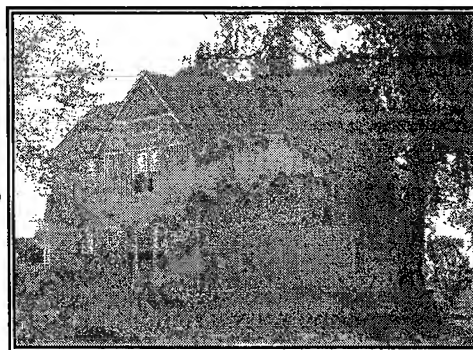


FIGURE 66  
PTOO-076  
FARMSTEAD  
VERNACULAR W/ QUEEN ANNE STYLE  
INFLUENCE  
CA. 1890  
PLATTE COUNTY (RURAL)

FIGURE 67  
PTOO-094  
FARMSTEAD  
QUEEN ANNE STYLE  
CA. 1905  
PLATTE COUNTY (RURAL)



<sup>181</sup> "New Bulletin Issued on 'Farm Buildings,'" *Columbus Daily Telegram* 8 October 1925.

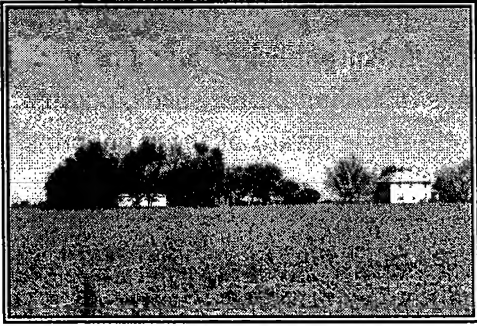


FIGURE 68  
PTOO-098  
FARMSTEAD  
TWO-STORY CUBE  
CA. 1910  
PLATTE COUNTY (RURAL)

FIGURE 69  
PTOO-154  
FARMSTEAD  
VERNACULAR  
CA. 1905  
PLATTE COUNTY (RURAL)

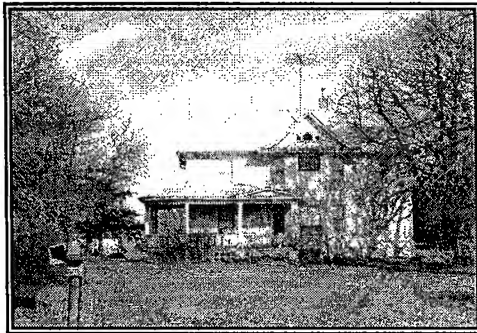


FIGURE 70  
PTOO-222  
FARMSTEAD  
TWO-STORY CUBE W/ QUEEN ANNE  
STYLE INFLUENCE  
CA. 1910  
PLATTE COUNTY (RURAL)

## HISTORIC CONTEXT: ENTERTAINMENT

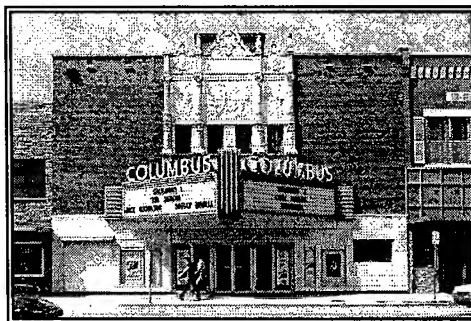
This context refers to activities that relax, amuse, divert or engage people.

Initially, commercial buildings and opera houses were fitted with screens to accommodate the rising popularity of silent pictures. However, as movies became widely accepted as a form of entertainment, theater owners began erecting ornate buildings to present an enticing environment for movie-goers. These motion picture houses were usually located in the heart

of the commercial district.<sup>182</sup> Only one building associated with the context of Entertainment was identified as potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The Columbus Theater stands as a fine example of an entertainment facility in the county. Common to other theaters of its period, the Columbus Theater features a prominent marquee neon sign.

The Columbus Theater is within the boundaries of, and contributing to, the proposed Columbus Commercial Historic District, however it is also potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places individually.

FIGURE 71  
PTO 1-125  
COLUMBUS THEATER  
ART DECO  
1926  
COLUMBUS



## HISTORIC CONTEXT: INDUSTRIES

This context refers to crafts, arts or businesses that involve the extraction of raw materials, manufacturing and/or processing. The latter is distinct from extraction and manufacturing, and includes processing, preparation, and packaging.

During the reconnaissance survey of Platte County, only a small number of properties identified were associated with the context of Industry. Like many agriculturally-based communities, early industry in Platte County often developed to support the demands of local residents, such as grain mills, blacksmith, packing plant, creamery, and even bottling companies. One of these properties, known as the C. Segelke Building and constructed as the Columbus Bottling Works, was listed on the National Register in 1991. This building, constructed in 1887, displays brick construction and ornate window hoods and cornice. It is located several blocks to the southwest of the oldest commercial development in

<sup>182</sup> Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988), 6.

Columbus. Another building, which is located within the boundaries of, and contributes to, the proposed Columbus Commercial Historic District, is the Columbus Fuel and Storage building. A one-story, brick vernacular form building, it features a flat awning, loading ramp, brick construction and utilitarian styling. The Columbus Planing Mill Building, constructed in the mid-1890s, features brick construction with segmental arch windows, and heavy timber supports on the interior.

The following buildings are listed on or potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places:

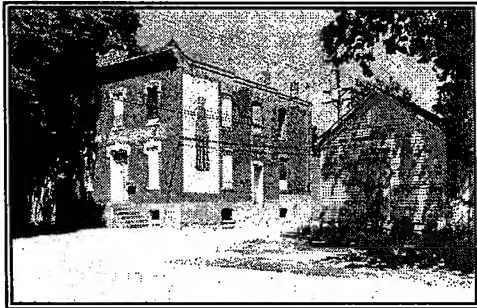


FIGURE 72  
PTO I-077  
C. SEGELKE BUILDING  
ITALIANATE STYLE  
1887  
COLUMBUS  
LISTED ON NATIONAL REGISTER  
1991

FIGURE 73  
PTO I-088  
COLUMBUS FUEL AND STORAGE  
20TH CENTURY COMMERCIAL  
VERNACULAR  
1917  
COLUMBUS

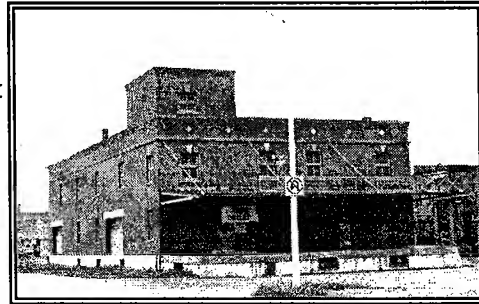


FIGURE 74  
PTO I-332  
COLUMBUS PLANING MILL  
VERNACULAR  
CA. 1895  
COLUMBUS

## HISTORIC CONTEXT: COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

This context refers to the development of a system of buying and selling commodities, goods and/or services.

In general, the majority of commercial buildings in the county display masonry construction and mainly range in height from one to two-stories. Retail stores, restaurants, financial institutions, offices, fraternal lodges, and apartments occupied all levels of these buildings. Potentially eligible commercial buildings in the county range from high style architecture to vernacular forms. Commercial Italianate represents one of the most common early architectural styles utilized in the county. Distinctive features related to this style include wide eaves, brackets, and ornamental window hoods. Later styles, such as Beaux Arts and Chicago Commercial, are also visible in the county. Beaux Arts style buildings, entrenched in classical design, display paired columns, blind parapets or balustrades, and decorative urns. Chicago Commercial style, developed in the late nineteenth century, is characterized by the use of metal skeletons, three-part rectangular windows, and ornamental spandrels and cornices. Sullivanesque style detailing on these buildings, such as terra cotta panels, include geometric and nature-based figures. Twentieth century commercial vernacular buildings, constructed during the early decades of the 1900s, are simplistic in design. This form is characterized by brick construction and large display windows, as well as ornamentation such as corbeling, cornices, and transoms.<sup>183</sup>

Although this section only includes the potentially eligible individual commercial properties, as a result of this project, a National Register nomination for the Columbus Commercial Historic District was drafted. (For more information regarding this topic, please see Chapter III.) Additionally, the commercial district in Humphrey has been identified as a potentially eligible historic district. Humphrey's commercial center displays a high number of intact twentieth century commercial vernacular buildings. It is a fine example of a commercial district constructed in the state of Nebraska shortly after the turn of the century.

The following buildings are individually either currently listed on, or potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places:

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<sup>183</sup> Marilyn W. Klein and David P. Fogel, *Clues to American Architecture* (Washington, D.C.: Starrhill Press, 1986), 22-23, 36-39; John J.G. Blumenson, *Identifying American Architecture* (Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1981), 36-37, 64-67; Barbara Wyatt, *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin* vol. 2 (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), 3-10.

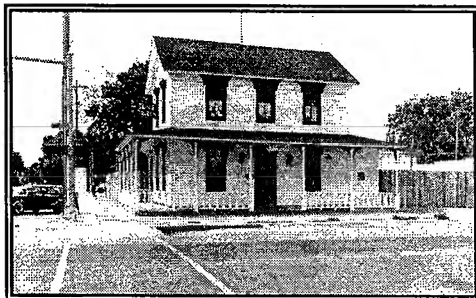


FIGURE 75  
PTO I-002  
GLUR'S TAVERN  
GABLE ELL W/ ITALIANATE STYLE  
CA. 1876  
COLUMBUS  
LISTED ON NATIONAL REGISTER  
1975

FIGURE 76  
PTO I-098  
PHILLIPS & FRIEDHOF BUILDING  
CHICAGO COMMERCIAL STYLE  
1918  
COLUMBUS

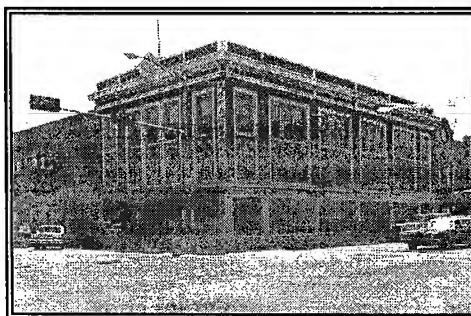
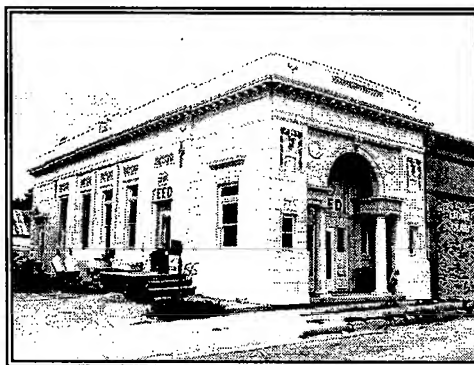


FIGURE 77  
PTO I-110  
HENRY GASS BUILDING  
20TH CENTURY COMMERCIAL  
VERNACULAR  
1924  
COLUMBUS

FIGURE 78  
PTO3-003  
CITIZENS STATE BANK  
BEAUX ART STYLE  
CA. 1929  
CRESTON



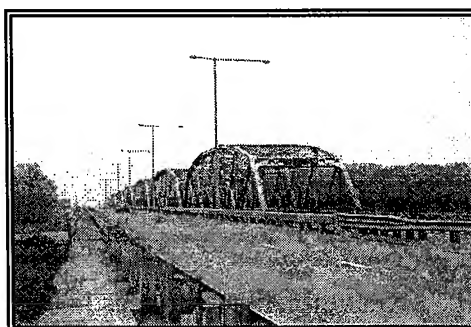
## HISTORIC CONTEXT: TRANSPORTATION

This context refers to the conveying of material and/or people from one place to another.

A number of single and double span pony truss bridges were identified throughout the county. These bridges are often described as a low truss, which stretch from fifteen to twenty-five feet.<sup>184</sup> The most significant historic bridge in the county, an overhead truss, stretches across the Loup River just south of Columbus. In 1992, this bridge was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

A unique object also identified with the context of Transportation is a Lincoln Highway marker located in Duncan. This concrete marker, which displays the letter "L", stands approximately three feet tall. It is the only marker associated with the Lincoln Highway in Platte County located on its original 1928 site.

FIGURE 79  
PTOO-068  
COLUMBUS LOUP RIVER BRIDGE  
RIGID-CONNECTED PARKER THROUGH  
TRUSS  
1932-1933  
PLATTE COUNTY (RURAL)  
LISTED ON NATIONAL REGISTER  
1992



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<sup>184</sup> Barbara Wyatt, *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin* vol. 2 (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), 12-5.



FIGURE 80  
PTO4-025  
LINCOLN HIGHWAY MARKER  
REINFORCED CONCRETE POST  
1928  
DUNCAN

## HISTORIC CONTEXT: PUBLIC & PRIVATE UTILITIES

This context refers to services (such as light, power, or water) provided or controlled by private, quasi-public, or government entities, commonly viewed as necessities.

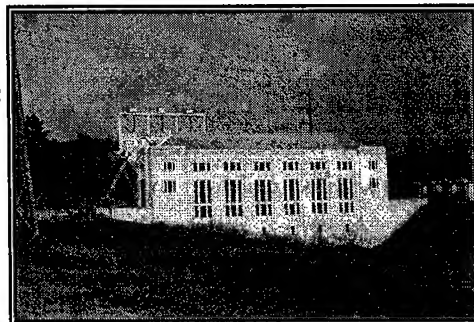
Due to the abundant water-power sources in the county, this context categorizes a number of unique Loup River Public Power District structures significant on a statewide level. Constructed in the mid-1930s, the Loup River Power District received financial backing from the Public Works Administration (PWA). The largest structures completed for this project in Platte County include two powerhouses, located near the communities of Monroe and Columbus, which display streamlined concrete facades. Both powerhouses, designed in an Art Moderne Style, display narrow bands of windows, smooth elevations, and rounded corners.





FIGURE 81  
PTOO-168  
LOUP RIVER POWERHOUSE (NEAR  
MONROE)  
ART MODERNE  
1936  
PLATTE COUNTY (RURAL)

FIGURE 82  
PTOO-230  
LOUP RIVER POWERHOUSE (NEAR  
COLUMBUS)  
ART MODERNE  
1936  
PLATTE COUNTY (RURAL)



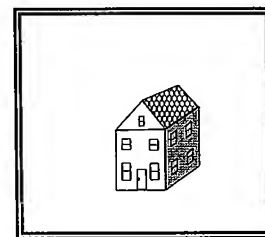
## HISTORIC CONTEXT: SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS

This context refers to the division, acquisition and ownership of land; and related patterns created by cultural systems. The context is not restricted to any particular era or cultural group.

The largest number of buildings surveyed in Platte County were residences. Because such a large number of houses was evaluated for this project, it was necessary to set more strict integrity standards for houses than for other property types (such as industrial or commercial buildings). Therefore, houses which were added to the NeHBS inventory were evaluated based whether or not they appeared much as when they were erected, or if alterations were made, they were determined to have been changed more than fifty years ago. Therefore, no houses with new siding material, windows, doors, or modern patios or porches were added to the inventory, unless the alterations were made to a side of the house which was not visible from the street or road.

The physical fabric in the urban settings generally range from vernacular forms to high style architecture. Vernacular forms, such as front, side, and cross gables, gable ells and Ts, and one and two-story cubes comprise the most popular types of houses in the county. Characterized by simplicity, these buildings usually are identified by their height, floor plan and roof type. Construction methods for residential properties in Platte County include balloon frame, brick, and concrete block. Construction periods attached to each vernacular form listed below are based upon dates utilized in the central states of the country.<sup>185</sup>

- The **front gable** form, characterized by a rectangular plan, was mainly constructed between 1840 and 1925. The gable ends of this form define the front and rear elevation of the house.

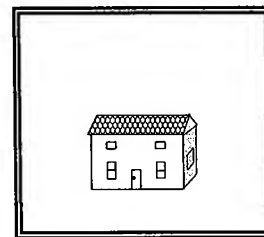


FRONT GABLE

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<sup>185</sup> Barbara Wyatt, *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin* vol. 2 (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), 3-1 to 3-10.

- A **side gable** building, which is also characterized by a rectangular plan, displays gable ends over the side elevations of the house. This form, which has been prominent for approximately one hundred years, dates between 1840 and 1940.



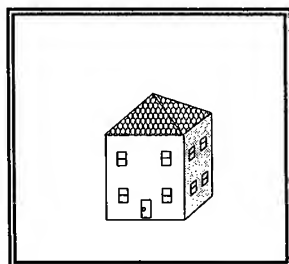
SIDE GABLE

- The **gable ell** form, constructed between approximately 1860 and 1910, often exhibits two gabled sections set perpendicular to one another. This form usually consists of an "L" or "T" plan and displays a variety of stories.

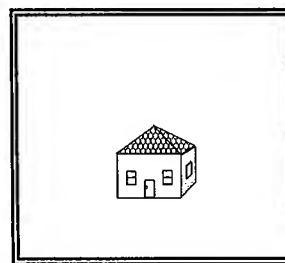


GABLE ELL

- While the **two-story cube** dates from approximately 1850 to 1880, the smaller version known as the **one-story cube** was constructed from approximately 1870 to 1930. It is important to note that two-story cubes constructed after the turn of the century often display features characteristic of a related style, the American Foursquare. Hipped roofs and boxy massing typify the one and two-story cubes.

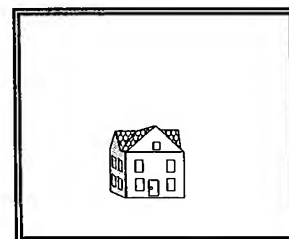


TWO STORY CUBE



ONE STORY CUBE

- The **cross gable** form is named for two intersecting, identical roof lines. These buildings, which normally stand two-stories high, exhibit square plans. The cross gable form dates from approximately 1890 to 1930.



CROSS GABLE

Additionally, high style buildings were identified during the reconnaissance survey of Platte County. Many of the simplistic designed houses display features from many of the more refined styles. High styles exhibited in the county include Queen Anne, Italianate, Tudor Revival, Dutch Colonial Revival, Second Empire Revival, and American Foursquare.<sup>186</sup>

- **Queen Anne**, which dates from 1880-1900, is characterized by asymmetrical facades, steeply pitched rooflines, a variety of wall surface textures, prominent towers, tall chimneys, and porches with bargeboard trim.
- Erected between 1870 and 1890, **Italianate** houses primarily stand two stories tall. They display square, rectangular, or L-shaped plans with low-pitched hip or occasionally gable roofs and wide eaves. These houses are often ornamented with heavy brackets, tall narrow windows, front porches, and a cupola.
- Dating between 1900 and 1940, **Tudor Revival** houses display half-timbering with a mixture of wall surfaces. Steeply pitched gabled rooflines, grouped windows, and tall chimneys often adorn these houses.
- **Dutch Colonial Revival**, which dates between 1895 and 1920, is identified by its use of the gambrel roof. Other features include double-hung, multi-paned windows and prominent doors ornamented with side lights, pilasters, fanlights, and pediments.
- The mansard roof serves as the most visible feature of **Second Empire Revival** houses, constructed between 1870 and 1880. Details on these buildings include dormer windows, iron cresting, prominent cornices, arched windows and doors, corner towers, and central projecting bays.
- **American Foursquare** houses, constructed between 1900 and 1930, are two-stories tall with low hipped roofs. These buildings are often ornamented with overhanging eaves, central dormers, Tuscan columns, and balustraded or closed railings on the one-story porches.

Standard plans were likely used in the construction of many Platte County homes. After the 1840s, America's population became increasing transient. With the influx of immigrants, westward migration across the country, and increased population architectural promoters

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<sup>186</sup> Barbara Wyatt, *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin* vol. 2 (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), 2-6, 2-11, 2-15, 2-25, 2-29 to 2-30; Marilyn W. Klein and David P. Fogel, *Clues to American Architecture* (Washington, D.C.: Starrhill Press, 1986), 13, 22-25, 28-29, 46.

played upon the idea that single family dwellings provided stability. Furthermore, home ownership also afforded financial insurance in an unstable economy. Plan book authors capitalized on the sense of insecurity felt in the growing country. Promoters of standardized architectural plans utilized common architectural terms, mill cut materials, and standard house types to give the middle class an impression that they could move often and experience less of a disruption. The purpose of the standard plan single family dwelling evolved through several stages. In the mid 1800s, plan book authors believed that a house should be viewed as a guarded haven. By the end of the century, they opined that a house should reflect creativity. After the turn of the century, the houses designed for the middle class served as a tools to promote better health.<sup>187</sup>

One of the most recognized styles to utilize standardized plans was the **Bungalow**, which was designed to upgrade well-being with an emphasis on nature. From the 1910s to 1940s, the Bungalow served as one of the most popular style of homes erected in the United States. It was one of the first architectural trends to spread from the west coast to the east. Due to its practical design and low construction costs the style was promoted by magazines and plan books, contractors, home economists, and even feminists. This style of house allowed people of moderate incomes to afford a dwelling.<sup>188</sup>

The Bungalow is characterized by projecting rooflines, large-scale chimneys, large front porches, and millwork ornamentation such as brackets. Often, when second stories were constructed they were downplayed to the give the house a horizontal appearance. A variety of original materials clad the exterior of the Bungalow including weatherboard, stucco, pebble dash, and stone. Interior features include large, open porches, fully equipped kitchens and bathrooms, and exposed rooms.<sup>189</sup>

The local paper in Columbus provided subscribers with standard plans for houses. In 1925 a section in the *Columbus Daily Telegram* entitled "Help for the Man Who Wants To Build," contained information from the Architects Small House Service Bureau of the United States, Inc. The articles included line drawings of the houses and floor plans, measurements, plan numbers, materials, verbal descriptions of the interiors, and question and answer columns. Catchy phrases located above the illustrations included: "Combined-Individuality and Value;

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<sup>187</sup> Clifford Edward Clark, Jr. *The American Family Home, 1800-1960* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 238-240.

<sup>188</sup> Clifford Edward Clark, Jr. *The American Family Home, 1800-1960* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 183-184.

<sup>189</sup> Barbara Wyatt, *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin* vol. 2 (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), 2-26.

No Waste Space in this Cozy Home; Here's Home That Gives Owner Pride; Beauty Combines with Practicability; Where Dreams Come True; A Six Room House at Moderate Cost; A Prize Winning Small House; Of Interest to Newly Weds."

The architecturally significant houses in Platte County range from high style to prefabricated buildings. These single dwellings were constructed in an eighty year period, dating from 1870 up to 1950. Thirty-one houses in Platte County are potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.



FIGURE 83  
PTO I-O28  
HOUSE  
TWO-STORY CUBE W/ QUEEN ANNE  
STYLE INFLUENCE  
CA. 1900  
COLUMBUS

FIGURE 84  
PTO I-O40  
HOUSE  
QUEEN ANNE STYLE  
CA. 1890  
COLUMBUS

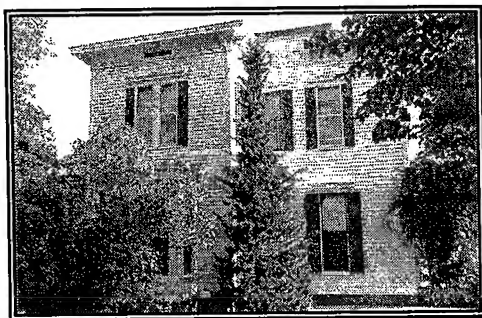
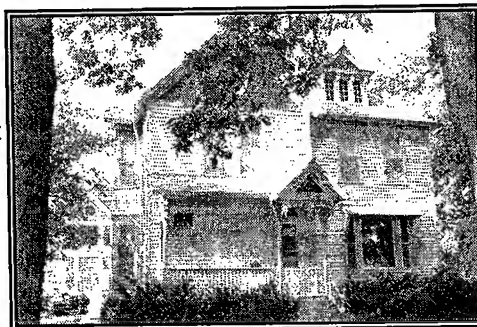


FIGURE 85  
PTO I-O49  
HOUSE  
ITALIANATE STYLE  
CA. 1875  
COLUMBUS

FIGURE 86  
PTO I-056  
HOUSE  
BUNGALOW  
CA. 1925  
COLUMBUS

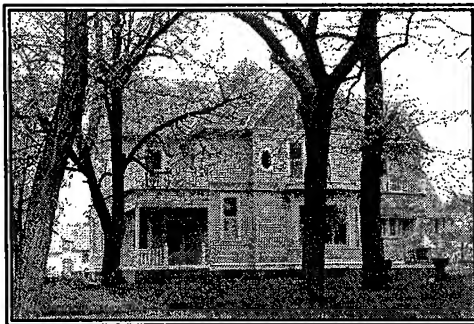
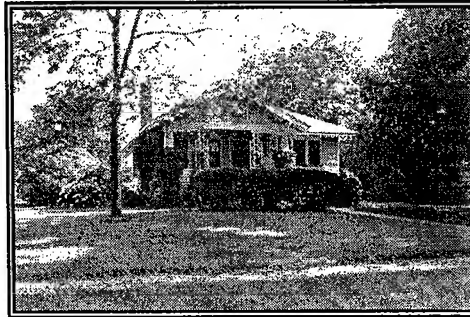


FIGURE 87  
PTO I-058  
HOUSE  
QUEEN ANNE STYLE  
CA. 1900  
COLUMBUS

FIGURE 88  
PTO I-059  
BRUGGER HOUSE  
AMERICAN FOURSQUARE  
CA. 1915  
COLUMBUS

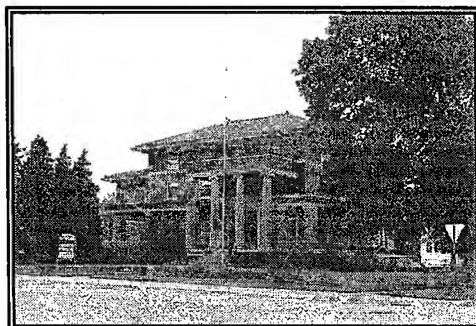
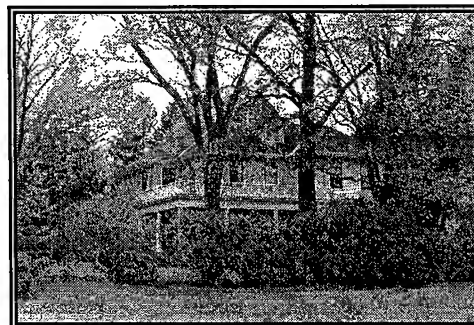


FIGURE 89  
PTO I-134  
DR. CARROLL D. AND LORENA R.  
(NORTH) EVANS HOUSE  
ECLECTIC  
1908-1911  
COLUMBUS  
LISTED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
1991



FIGURE 90  
PTO I-149  
HOUSE  
QUEEN ANNE STYLE  
CA. 1890  
COLUMBUS

FIGURE 91  
PTO I-153  
HOUSE  
TUDOR REVIVAL STYLE  
CA. 1930  
COLUMBUS

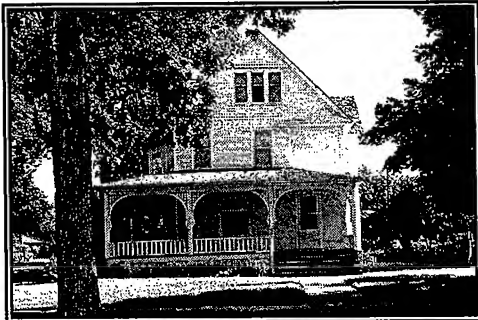
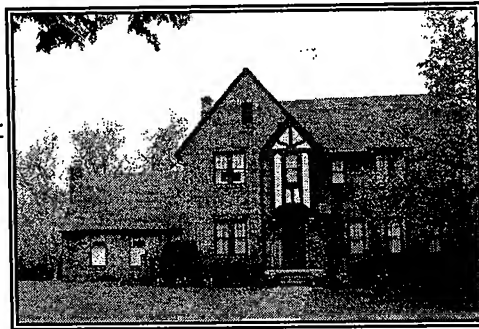


FIGURE 92  
PTO I-154  
HOUSE  
QUEEN ANNE STYLE  
CA. 1890  
COLUMBUS

FIGURE 93  
PTO I-155  
HOUSE  
VERNACULAR  
CA. 1910  
COLUMBUS

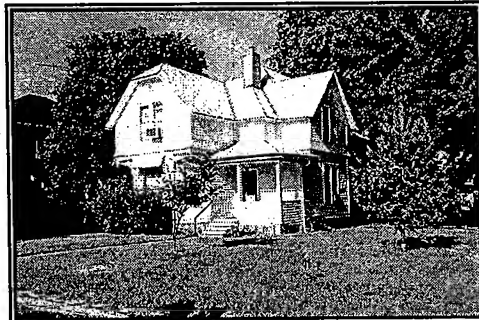




FIGURE 94  
PTO 1-158  
HOUSE  
TWO-STORY CUBE  
CA. 1920  
COLUMBUS



FIGURE 95  
PTO 1-160  
HOUSE  
AMERICAN FOURSQUARE  
CA. 1935  
COLUMBUS

FIGURE 96  
PTO 1-161  
HOUSE  
DUTCH COLONIAL REVIVAL STYLE  
CA. 1910  
COLUMBUS

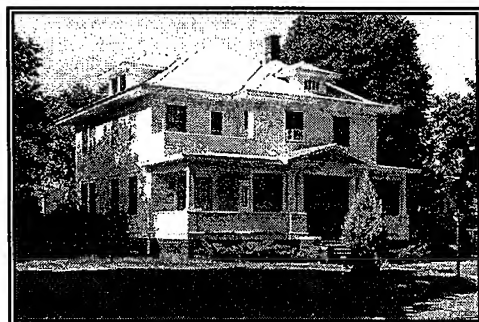


FIGURE 97  
PTO 1-164  
HOUSE  
AMERICAN FOURSQUARE  
CA. 1910  
COLUMBUS



FIGURE 98  
PTO 1-168  
HOUSE  
ONE-STORY CUBE  
CA. 1900  
COLUMBUS

FIGURE 99  
PTO 1-170  
H.E. SNYDER HOUSE  
TUDOR REVIVAL STYLE  
1928-1929  
COLUMBUS  
LISTED ON NATIONAL REGISTER  
1986

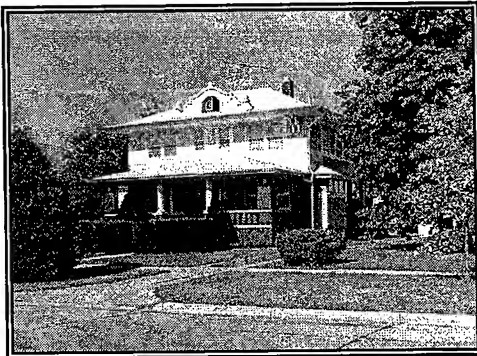


FIGURE 100  
PTO 1-175  
HOUSE  
AMERICAN FOURSQUARE W/ SPANISH  
REVIVAL INFLUENCE  
CA. 1920  
COLUMBUS

FIGURE 101  
PTO 1-177  
FREDERICK L. GOTTSCHALK HOUSE  
AMERICAN FOURSQUARE W/ NEO  
CLASSICAL REVIVAL STYLE INFLUENCE  
1870/1911  
COLUMBUS  
LISTED ON NATIONAL REGISTER  
1982

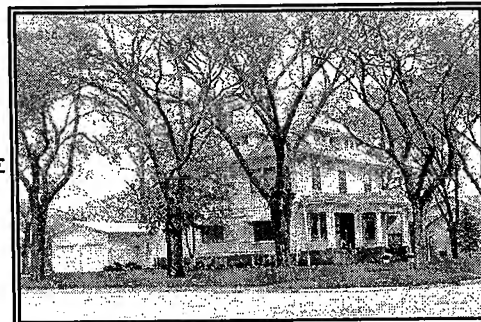


FIGURE 102  
PTO 1-187  
HOUSE  
QUEEN ANNE STYLE  
CA. 1900  
COLUMBUS



FIGURE 103  
PTO 1-385  
HOUSE  
BUNGALOW  
CA. 1920  
COLUMBUS

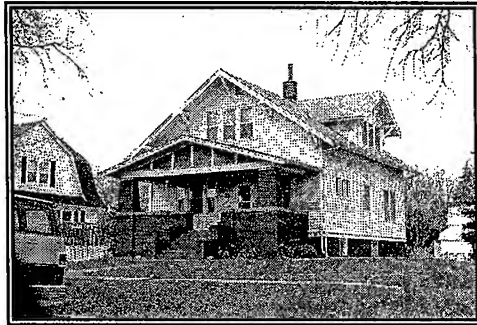


FIGURE 104  
PTO 1-388  
HOUSE  
AMERICAN FOURSQUARE  
CA. 1915  
COLUMBUS



FIGURE 105  
PTO 1-390  
HOUSE  
AMERICAN FOURSQUARE  
CA. 1920  
COLUMBUS

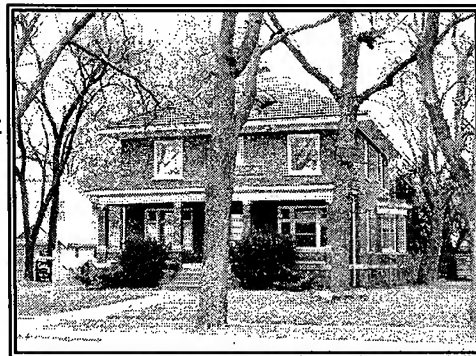




FIGURE 106  
PTO1-397  
HOUSE  
TWO-STORY CUBE  
CA. 1910  
COLUMBUS

FIGURE 107  
PTO3-017  
HOUSE  
SIDE GABLE W/BUNGALOW INFLUENCE  
CA. 1900  
CRESTON



FIGURE 108  
PTO5-010  
HOUSE  
QUEEN ANNE STYLE  
CA. 1900  
HUMPHREY

FIGURE 109  
PTO5-026  
WILLIAM EIMERS HOUSE  
SECOND EMPIRE REVIVAL STYLE  
CA. 1880  
HUMPHREY



FIGURE 110  
PT05-073  
HOUSE  
BUNGALOW  
CA. 1925  
HUMPHREY

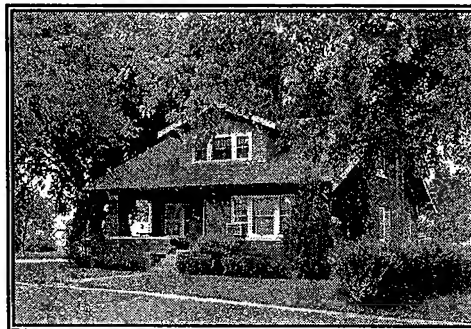
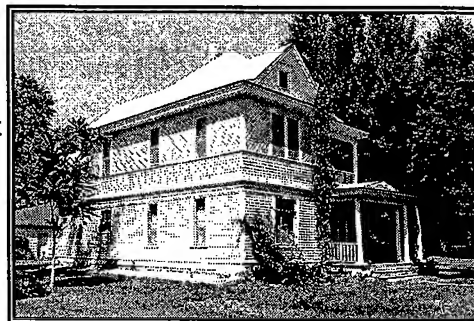


FIGURE 111  
PT07-007  
C.W. HOLLINGSHEAD HOUSE  
QUEEN ANNE STYLE  
CA. 1890  
MONROE

FIGURE 112  
PT09-006  
HOUSE  
QUEEN ANNE STYLE INFLUENCE  
CA. 1900  
PLATTE CENTER



One Lustron house (PT01-277) was identified in Columbus during the reconnaissance survey. Constructed almost entirely of prefabricated procelainized steel panels measuring two feet square, Lustrons were manufactured in the late 1940s. Characterized by standardized plans ranging in size from one to three bedrooms, the houses featured stainless steel roofs and exteriors available in pink, blue, beige, or yellow. The Lustron manufacturing plant in Columbus, Ohio also provided matching steel framed garages. At least nineteen of the approximately three thousand Lustrons erected in the United States are located in Nebraska. This figure is based upon survey information in the NeSHPO database, gathered since 1977, and includes three-quarters of the state. Even though Lustrons fall outside the arbitrary fifty year period of significance, their unique construction materials and rareness

**3) NOMINATE POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES, IDENTIFIED IN THE RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY, TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER:**

A total of fifty six (56) properties were determined, during the course of reconnaissance survey of Platte County, to be potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Many of these properties could be individually listed on the National Register, or a Multiple Property Listing of the Historic Resources of Platte County could be compiled in order to nominate them more efficiently. See Chapter V, Historic Contexts for details on potentially eligible properties.

**4) STATEWIDE INTENSIVE SURVEY OF LINCOLN HIGHWAY AND RELATED RESOURCES IN NEBRASKA:**

As a part of the Reconnaissance Survey of Platte County, intensive research was performed on properties associated with the historic Lincoln Highway. Though this kind of intensive identification, research and documentation has been undertaken in other Nebraska counties as well, a comprehensive intensive survey of Lincoln Highway routes and resources throughout the entire state may provide a broader historic context under which to evaluate the integrity of these sites.

**5) STATEWIDE MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING OF LINCOLN HIGHWAY PROPERTIES IN NEBRASKA:**

Once identification of Lincoln Highway related resources has been completed, a statewide Multiple Property Listing on the National Register of Historic Places of these resources will provide parties interested in the Lincoln Highway with the tools to proceed with preservation activities.

**6) STATEWIDE MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING OF LUSTRON HOUSES IN NEBRASKA:**

One Lustron house was identified in the Platte County survey, and only nineteen are known to be extant in Nebraska out of a total of only approximately three thousand in the entire nation. Lustron houses represent an architectural style which was catered to the needs of post-World War II housing-starved Americans. Lustron houses would be eligible under Criterion C for their unique architectural form.

7) MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING FOR POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE RURAL RESOURCES, SUCH AS FARMSTEADS, SCHOOLS, CHURCHES, AND TOWNSHIP HALLS, IN PLATTE COUNTY:

The rural resources of Platte County are among the most endangered in the county. Due to changes in agricultural trends, a shift from rural to urban churches, and the consolidation of the school system nearly thirty years ago, these rural resources are increasingly becoming altered, abandoned or demolished. Special attention to rural resources may help to preserve the Nebraska rural heritage.

8) HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA:

As a part of this project, a National Register historic district will be designated for the main commercial area of Columbus. As a result, preservation programs such as historic tax credits will become available to the property owners of these buildings. A historic preservation plan is an excellent way for the community, as well as the municipal government, to have influence in the way that preservation activities are performed. Components of such a plan may include the designation of a historic sites commission, implementation of a historic preservation ordinance, which may dictate in what manner preservation is enacted, as well as controlling new construction within the historic district, and design guidelines, which will give property owners some guidance on proper historic rehabilitation techniques. It is important to be aware that a historic preservation plan is a document to be used as a planning tool, and if properly compiled will include the input from all groups within the community who would be interested in such a plan, such as municipal government, city council, Chamber of Commerce, and all property owners within the commercial area.

9) APPLICATION FOR MAIN STREET PROGRAM STATUS OF COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA:

The National Main Street Program is directed through the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and its principles incorporate business development plans, guidance to local businesses, while embracing the concepts of historic preservation. The Nebraska Lied Main Street Program oversees Main Street programs in the state. Application and acceptance to this program will enhance Columbus' ability to receive technical assistance, grants, and other financial and technical advice.

10) APPLICATION FOR CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT (CLG) STATUS OF COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA:

The CLG program, which is administered through the Nebraska State Historical Society (NSHS), will provide Columbus with further assistance pertinent to historic preservation

projects in the city, and would complement other programs, such as the Main Street Program, a historic preservation plan, and/or historic preservation ordinance.



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## APPENDIX

### DEFINITION OF ARCHITECTURAL TERMS AND STYLES

**AKA:** also known as.

**AMERICAN FOURSQUARE STYLE (1900 - 1930):** Popularized by mail-order catalogues and speculative builders in the early twentieth century, the style is typified by its box-like massing, two-stories, hipped roof, wide overhanging eaves, central dormers and one-story porch spanning the front facade.

**ARCH:** A curved structural member used to span an opening.

**ART DECO STYLE (1925 - 1945):** A style which incorporated futuristic or highly stylized historical details. The style is characterized by an angular, hard edge suggesting machine precision, low-relief geometrical ornamentation with details such as shallow fluted columns, chevrons, stylized sunbursts, and smooth materials such as granite, terra cotta, and glass.

**ART MODERNE STYLE (1930 - 1950):** Related to the Art Deco style, it features industrial technology and streamlined simplicity. Features include smooth, rounded corners, horizontal massing, details in concrete, glass block, aluminum and stainless steel.

**BALLOON FRAME:** A type of support for wood-frame buildings which utilize vertical studs which extend the full height of the wall, and floor joists fasted to the studs with nails. Balloon frame buildings in Nebraska became popular with the expansion of the railroad, when milled lumber could be shipped to the plains for relatively low cost.

**BALUSTRADE:** Decorative, usually open design, railing generally found around exterior porches, balconies, and sometimes indoor stairs and balconies.

**BAY:** The area of a facade usually between piers or columns creating divisions of the main facade.

**BEAUX ARTS STYLE (1895 - 1920):** A form of Neo-Classical Revival based on monumentally-conceived classical design, taught in the eighteenth and nineteenth century at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris.

**BRACKETS:** Support members used under overhangs of a roof, usually decorative in nature.

**BUILDING:** A building is erected to house activities performed by people.

**BUNGALOW/CRAFTSMAN STYLE (1890 - 1940):** An architectural style characterized by overhanging eaves, modest size, open porches with large piers and low pitched roofs.

**CARARRA GLASS:** A type of opaque, colored glass which was popular as a cladding to commercial facades, particularly of the Art Deco and Art Moderne styles, in the 1920s through the 1950s.

**CHICAGO COMMERCIAL STYLE (1895 - 1930):** A commercial and office style of building which reflects new technologies at the turn of the century which allowed buildings to be built in greater heights and larger expanses of open floor space. It utilizes metal skeleton framing, usually steel, usually covered with a brick "skin" and fenestration typically in bands or groupings, often tripartite.

**COLONIAL REVIVAL STYLE (1900 - 1940):** Usually residential in type, the Colonial Revival style features symmetrical facades, classical details, gable roofs, columns, pilasters, denticulated cornices, and shutters.

**COLUMNS:** A circular or square vertical support member.

**COMMERCIAL VERNACULAR (CA. 1860 - 1930):** A form of building used to describe simply designed commercial buildings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which usually display large retail windows and recessed entrances on the first floor.

**CONSUL:** Lincoln Highway Association representatives at the state or local level.

**CONTRIBUTING (NATIONAL REGISTER DEFINITION):** A building, site, structure, or object that adds to the historic associations, historic architectural qualities for which a property is significant. The resource was present during the period of significance, relates to the documented significance of the property, and possesses historic integrity or is capable of yielding important information about the period.

**CONTRIBUTING (NEHBS DEFINITION):** A building, site, structure, object, or collection of buildings such as a farmstead, which meets the NeHBS criteria of integrity, historic association, historic architectural qualities, and was present during the period of significance. A property which contributes to the NeHBS is generally evaluated with less strictness than

for individual listing on the National Register, yet more strictness than buildings which may “contribute” to a proposed National Register district.

**CORBELING:** A series of projections typically found on a wall surface.

**CORNICE:** Any decorative member along the top of a wall.

**COUNTY CAPITOL (1880 - 1910):** This was a popular form for courthouses in the state and was inspired by the United States Capitol in Washington D.C. Usually situated on a courthouse square, these square-shaped monumental buildings exhibit corner pavilions, a prominent central domed tower, and Neo-Classical or Romanesque styling.

**DENTILS:** Small square blocks in masonry or wood usually located along the cornice.

**DORMERS:** A vertical window projecting from the roof. Variations of dormer types can be from the roof forms utilized, for example shed dormers, gable dormers, and hipped dormers.

**EAVES:** The edge of a roof that extends beyond the wall surface.

**ECLECTIC STYLE (1890 - 1910):** An eclectic building displays a combination of architectural elements from various types. It usually resulted when a house designed in one architectural style was remodeled in another.

**ELEVATION:** Any single side of a building or structure.

**ELIGIBLE:** Properties that meet the National Park Service criteria for nomination and listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

**EXTANT:** Still standing or existing (as in a building, structure, site, and/or object)

**FACADE:** The vertical elevation of a building, including front, sides, and back.

**FALSE FRONT:** A vernacular form of building, generally found on commercial buildings, which is typically a one-and-one-half story front gable frame building with a square facade which extends vertically in front of the front-facing gable. This gives an entering visitor the sense of approaching a larger building. This form is also known as “boom-town.”

**FENESTRATION:** The arrangement of openings, for example windows and doors, on an elevation.

**FOUNDATION:** The support of a building which is exposed near ground level.

**FRONT GABLE (CA. 1860 - 1910):** The vernacular form of a building, generally a house, in which the triangular end of the roof faces the street.

**GABLED ELL (CA. 1860 - 1910):** The vernacular form of a building, generally a house, in which two gabled wings are perpendicular to one another in order to form an "L" shaped plan.

**GABLED T (CA. 1860 - 1910):** The vernacular form of a building, generally a house, in which two gabled wings are perpendicular to one another in order to form a "T" shaped plan.

**GABLE END:** The triangular end of an exterior wall.

**GABLE ROOF:** A roof type formed by the meeting of two sloping roof surfaces.

**HIPPED ROOF:** A roof type formed by the meeting of four sloping roof surfaces.

**ITALIANATE STYLE (1870 - 1890):** A popular style for houses, these square, rectangular, or L-shaped two-story buildings have low-pitched hip roofs, with wide eaves usually supported by heavy brackets, tall narrow windows, and front porches. In some cases, the roof may be topped with a cupola.

**LATE GOTHIC REVIVAL (1880 - 1920):** A later version of the Gothic style, these buildings are generally larger and use heavy masonry construction. In churches, masonry is sometimes used throughout the structure. The pointed-arch window opening remains a key feature, however, designs are more subdued than those of the earlier period.

**LINTEL:** A horizontal member located at the top of a window, door or other opening.

**MANSARD ROOF:** A roof having two slopes on all four sides, and a flat top.

**MODERNISTIC STYLE (1930 - 1940):** Art Deco, the earlier Modernistic phase, was used primarily for public and commercial buildings and is characterized by angular composition, with towers and vertical projections and smooth wall surfaces with stylized and geometric motifs, including zigzags and chevrons. Art Moderne, the later version, shows smooth wall finishes without surface ornamentation, asymmetrical facades with a horizontal emphasis, flat roofs, rounded corners, and bands of windows or curved window glass creating a streamlined effect.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES:** The official Federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture which are significant in the prehistory or history of their community, state or nation. The program is administered through the National Park Service by way of State Historic Preservation Offices.

**NEO-CLASSICAL STYLE (1900 - 1920):** An architectural style characterized by a symmetrical facade and usually includes a pediment portico with classical columns.

**NON-CONTRIBUTING (NATIONAL REGISTER DEFINITION):** A building, site, structure, or object that does not add to the historic architectural qualities or historic associations for which a property is significant. The resource was not present during the period of significance; does not relate to the documented significance of the property; or due to alterations, disturbances, additions, or other changes, it no longer possesses historic integrity or is capable of yielding important information about the period.

**NONCONTRIBUTING (NEHBS DEFINITION):** A building, site, structure, object, or collection of buildings such as a farmstead, which does not meet the NeHBS criteria of integrity, historic association, historic architectural qualities, or was not present during the period of significance. Noncontributing properties are not generally entered into, nor kept in, the NeHBS inventory, however, exceptions do exist.

**OBJECT:** Artistic, simple, and/or small scale constructions not identified as buildings or structures.

**ONE-STORY CUBE (C. 1870 - 1930):** The vernacular form, generally of a house, which is a one-story building, box-like in massing, low-hipped roof, full front porch recessed under the roof, little ornamentation, and simple cladding, such as clapboard, and less frequently, brick or stucco.

**PARAPET:** A low wall located on the edge of a roof, may be stepped in form.

**PEDIMENT:** A decorative, often triangular or semicircular-shaped, element found at the gable of the roof, or above an entryway.

**PERIOD REVIVAL STYLE (1920 - 1930):** Influenced by the styles of medieval English and French country cottages, these houses are usually of two stories and display irregular massing, steeply pitched roofs with slate or clay tile covering, massive chimneys,

half-timbering, casement windows, and attached garages. Period revival styles include Georgian Revival, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and Dutch Colonial Revival.

**PILASTERS:** A rectangular column attached to a wall that is used for decorative purposes.

**PORTICO:** An entryway to a building, often with an overhanging covering which just covers the entry, yet not large enough to be considered a porch. Often found on period revival style buildings.

**PORTLAND CEMENT:** A combination of water, sand, fine stone and lime which hardens to a stone-like mass, and used extensively in building and road construction.

**POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE:** Properties that may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places pending further research and investigation.

**PRAIRIE SCHOOL STYLE (1900 - 1930):** This movement, popularized by the world-renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright, emphasized the integration of a building and its site. Elements of the style include a low-pitched roof line with wide over-hanging eaves, two-stories high with one-story porch, and an overall horizontal emphasis in the design.

**PROPERTY:** Building(s), site(s), structure(s) and/or object(s) situated within a delineated boundary.

**PROPERTY TYPE:** A classification for a building, structure, site, or object based on its historic use or function.

**QUEEN ANNE STYLE (1880-1900):** A style which enjoyed widespread popularity in the state, these two-story houses have asymmetrical facades and steeply pitched rooflines of irregular shape. Characteristics include a variety of surface textures on walls, prominent towers, tall chimneys, and porches with gingerbread trim.

**QUOINS:** A series of stones, bricks, or wood used to decorate the corners of a building.

**RETURNS:** The continuation of moulding from one surface to another, commonly seen as cornice returns which are carried into the gable end of a building.

**ROMANESQUE REVIVAL STYLE (1880-1920):** These buildings are generally of masonry construction and usually show some rough-faced stonework. The Roman or round-topped

arch is a key feature. Facades are asymmetrical and most examples have towers, brick corbeling and horizontal stone banding.

**ROOF TYPES:** See definitions of front gable, side gable, hipped, mansard, and shed.

**SASH:** The framework within which windows are set.

**SECOND EMPIRE STYLE (1870 - 1880):** A style used for both commercial and residential buildings which is most distinguished by its mansard roofs. Dormer windows are common and with elaborate mouldings and other ornamentations.

**SEGMENTAL ARCH:** An arch formed by the segment of a circle, generally portrayed over a door or window opening, usually constructed of stone or brick.

**SHED ROOF:** A roof consisting of one inclined plane.

**SIDE GABLE (1860-1940):** The vernacular form of a building, generally a house, in which the gable end of the roof is perpendicular to the street.

**SIDELIGHTS:** A lone fixed window usually flanking both sides of a door or another center window.

**SILL:** The horizontal framing member at the bottom of a window.

**SITE:** The location of a prehistoric or historic event.

**SPANISH COLONIAL REVIVAL STYLE (1900-1920):** These buildings, which have a southwestern flavor, show masonry construction usually covered with plaster or stucco, red-tile hipped roofs, and arcaded porches. Some facades are enriched with curvilinear and decorated roof lines.

**STEPPED FACADE:** A facade in which one of the bays protrude from the main plane of the building at a regular interval like stairs.

**STEPPED ROOF:** See parapet.

**STREAMLINED:** Smooth wall surfaces, emphasis on horizontal appearance, and curved corners, often used in relation to the Art Moderne style.

**STRING COURSE:** A continuous horizontal band of brick or stone on a building used to visually divide an elevation.

**STRUCTURE:** Practical constructions not used to shelter human activities.

**SULLIVANESQUE:** In the style of architect Louis Sullivan, generally extremely decorative elements, often utilizing stylized organic designs. Sullivanesque ornamentation is often executed in glazed terra cotta relief or wrought iron.

**TRANSOM:** A small window located above a door.

**TWO-STORY CUBE (c. 1860 - 1890):** The vernacular form, generally for a house, which is a two-story building box-like in massing, with a hipped roof, near absence of surface ornament and simple exterior cladding such as brick, clapboard, or stucco.

**VERNACULAR:** The vernacular form is a functional, simplistic building or structure without stylistic details.

**WEATHERBOARD:** Wood siding consisting of overlapping boards.